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# RAVEN OVER BERLIN



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# **TIGER**

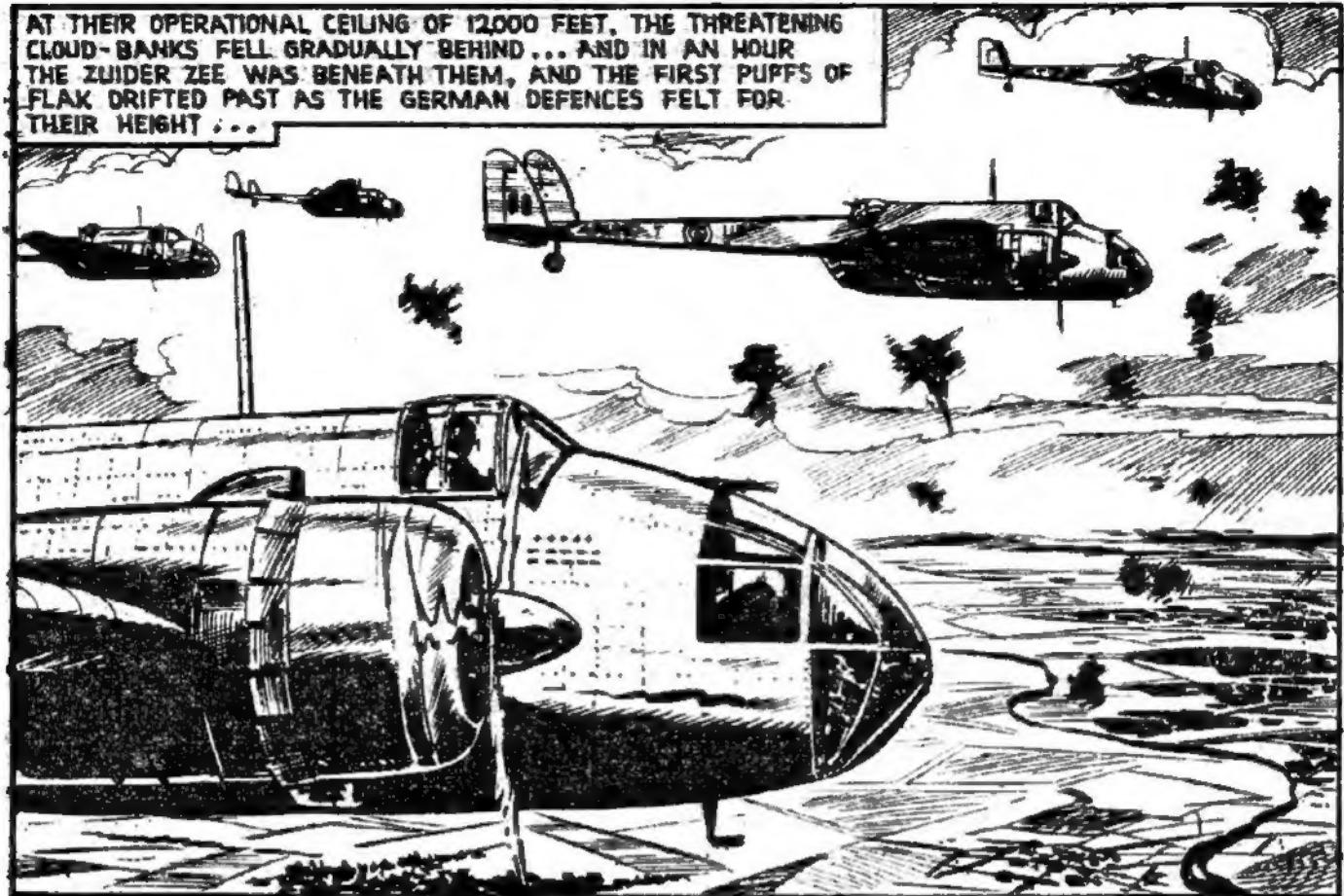
ONE OF  
THE  
FAMOUS  
FIVE STAR  
WEEKLIES

**ON SALE EVERY TUESDAY 4½d.**

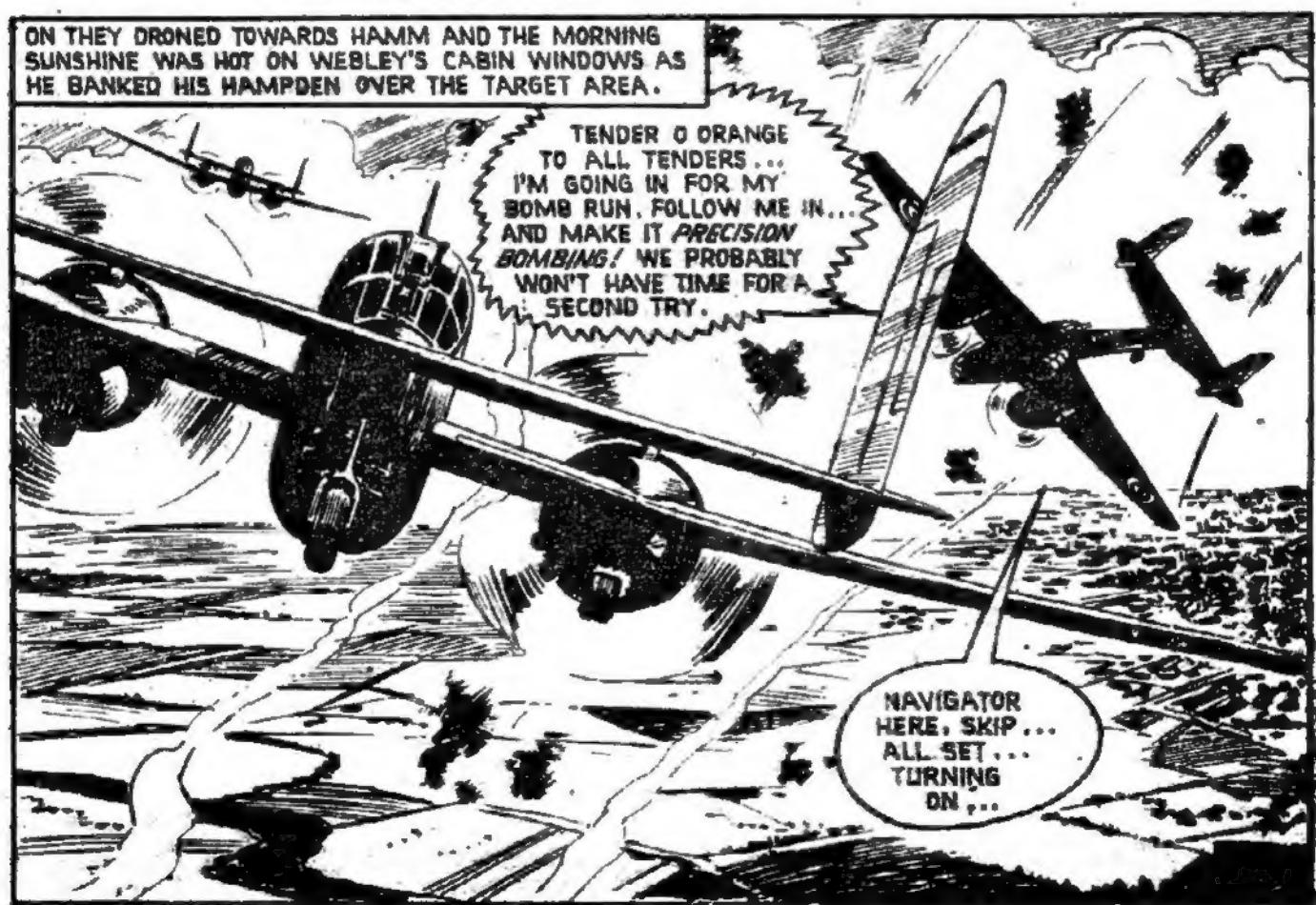
## Raven Over Berlin

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AT THEIR OPERATIONAL CEILING OF 12,000 FEET, THE THREATENING CLOUD-BANKS FELL GRADUALLY BEHIND... AND IN AN HOUR THE ZUIDER ZEE WAS BENEATH THEM, AND THE FIRST PUFFS OF FLAK DRIFTED PAST AS THE GERMAN DEFENCES FELT FOR THEIR HEIGHT...



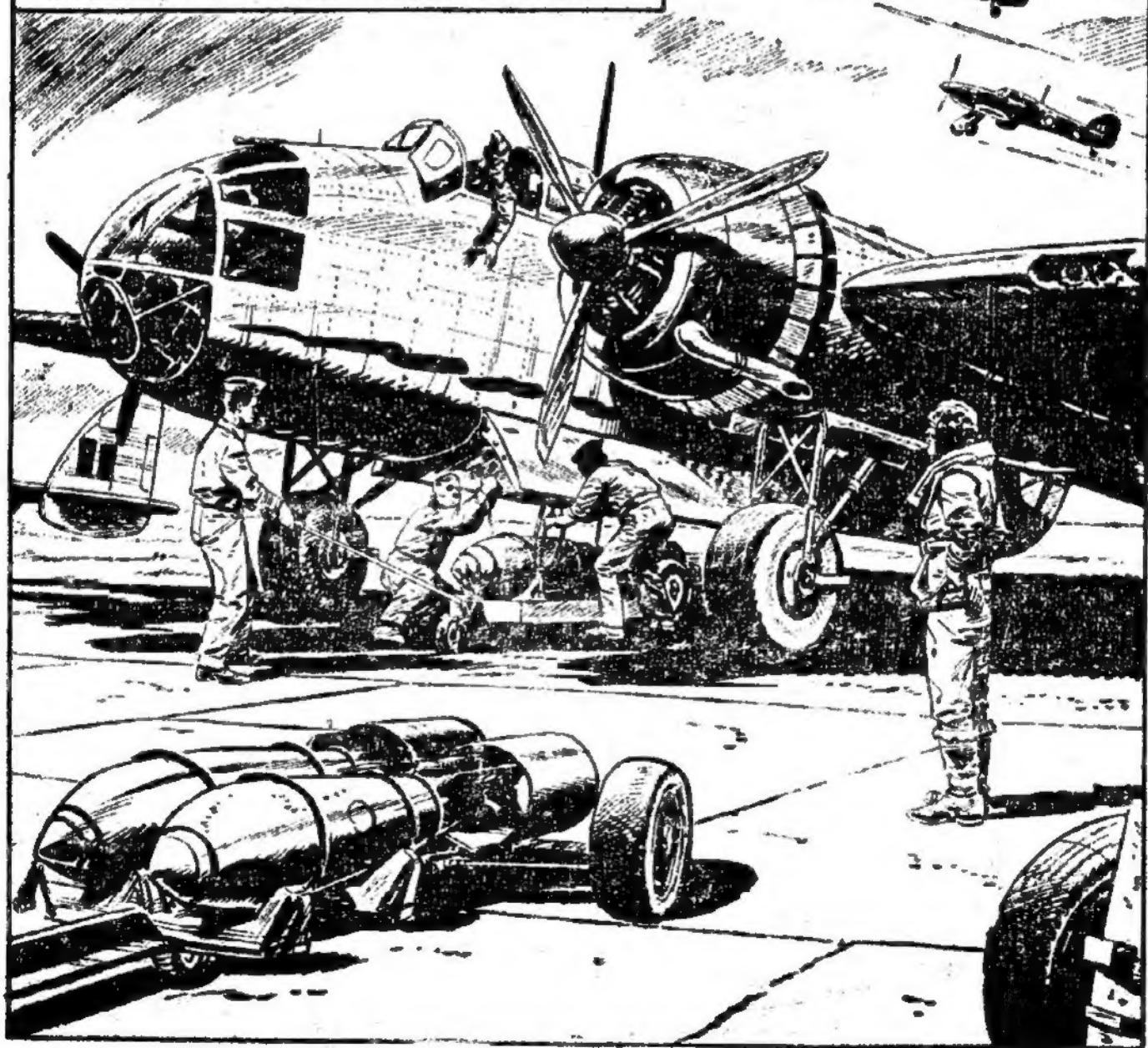
ON THEY DRONED TOWARDS HAMM AND THE MORNING SUNSHINE WAS HOT ON WEBLEY'S CABIN WINDOWS AS HE BANKED HIS HAMPDEN OVER THE TARGET AREA.



# RAVEN over BERLIN

IN EARLY 1941, BRITISH BOMBER COMMAND HAD NOT YET BECOME THE MIGHTY FORCE WHICH WAS TO POUND THE RUHR IN THE LATER STAGES OF THE WAR. ITS AIRCRAFT WERE EXCELLENT IN THEIR CLASS ... THE RAKISH HAMPDEN, THE ODD-LOOKING WHITLEY, THE SNUB-NOSED BLENHEIM, AND THE GLORIOUS WELLINGTON. BUT THEY WERE FEW IN NUMBER ... AND THEIR RANGE WAS LIMITED.

THEY WENT OUT DAY AND NIGHT AGAINST THE ENEMY IN ISOLATED SORTIES, STRIKING AT GERMAN COMMUNICATIONS WITH THEIR MODERATE BOMB LOADS.

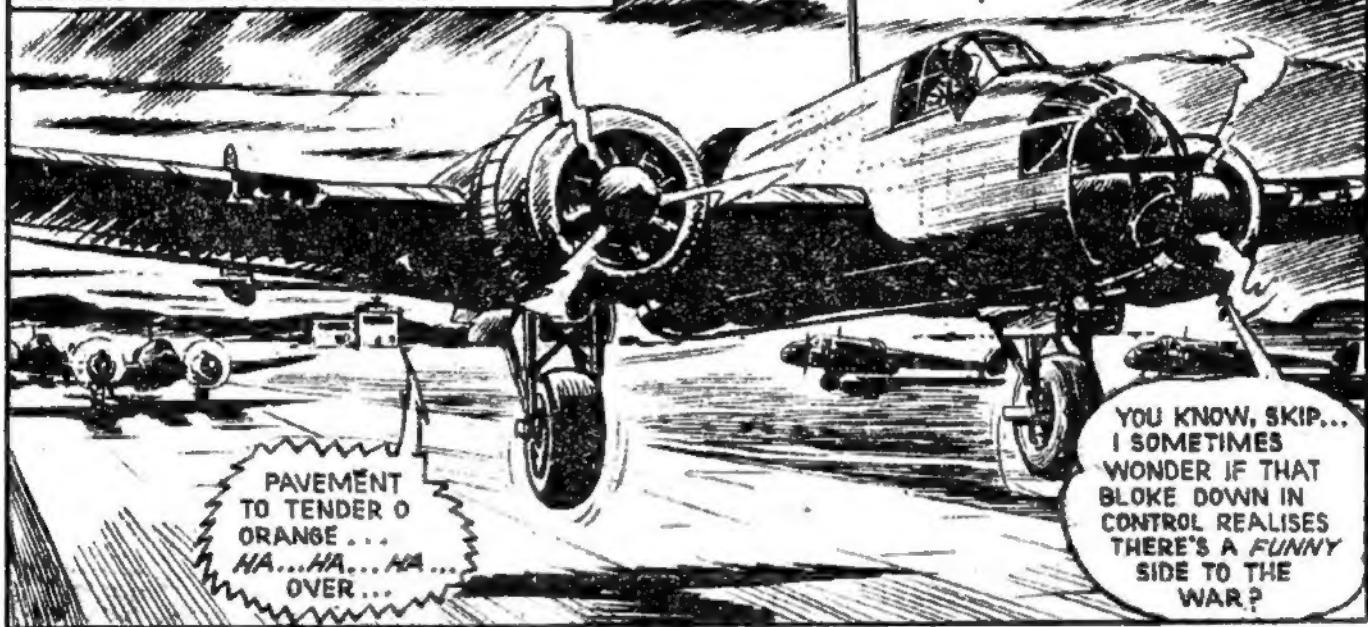


## Chapter 1.

## DISASTROUS ERROR

WING COMMANDER WEBLEY WAS THE OPERATIONAL COMMANDING OFFICER OF A SQUADRON OF HAMPDENS. IN THE FIRST DAWN LIGHT OF A SPRING MORNING IN 1941, HIS LAIDEN HAMPDEN ROARED DOWN THE RUNWAY AND OUT ACROSS THE LINCOLNSHIRE FENS, FOLLOWED BY TWELVE OTHERS. THE TARGET FOR THE DAY WAS THE MARSHALLING YARDS AT HAMM.

HALLO, PAVEMENT... THIS IS TENDER O ORANGE. IT'S JUST OCCURRED TO ME... WE'LL BE DROPPING OUR EGGS ON HAMM. SOUNDS AS IF SOMETHING'S COOKING...



ALL AIRCRAFT WERE EQUIPPED WITH A DEVICE KNOWN AS I.F.F. ... "IDENTIFICATION FRIEND OR FOE". THIS SENT OUT A SIGNAL WHICH WAS PICKED UP BY BRITISH RADAR, BUT ALSO BY GERMAN SCREENS. IF THE DEVICE WAS STILL WORKING WHEN THE AIRCRAFT WAS WITHIN RANGE OF ENEMY DETECTORS, SO THE RULE WAS "ALWAYS SWITCH OFF I.F.F. ON THE WAY OUT, AND SWITCH ON I.F.F. ON THE WAY IN..."

HALLO, TENDERS... THIS IS TENDER O ORANGE! SWITCH OFF YOUR I.F.F. AND MAINTAIN RADIO SILENCE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE! OVER!

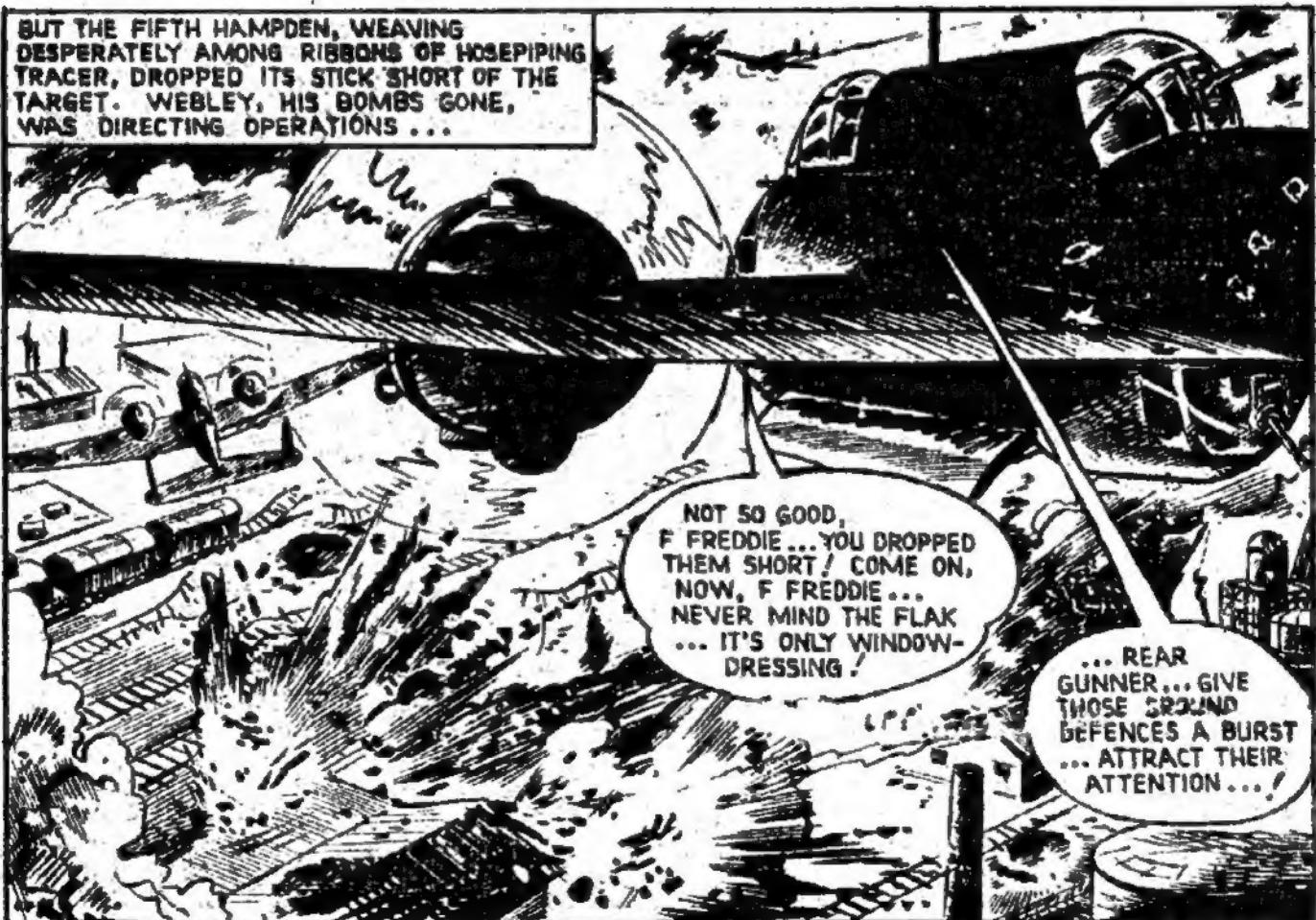


## Raven Over Berlin

MOST OF THE BOMBS FELL WITH DEADLY ACCURACY INTO THE CROWDED MARSHALLING YARDS ...



BUT THE FIFTH HAMPDEN, WEAVING DESPERATELY AMONG RIBBONS OF HOSEPIPING TRACER, DROPPED ITS STICK SHORT OF THE TARGET. WEBLEY, HIS BOMBS GONE, WAS DIRECTING OPERATIONS ...



## Raven Over Berlin

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AND THEN THE LUFTWAFFE ARRIVED ...

M.E.  
ONE-O-NINE  
DIVING. TURN TO STARBOARD ...  
GO!

CHECK,  
REAR-GUNNER...  
STARBOARD  
TURN IT IS!

WEBLEY'S HAMPDEN SWEPT DOWN AND AWAY... BUT NOT BEFORE THE CANNON SHELLS FROM THE PURSUING MESSERSCHMITT HAD FLICKED BRIEFLY THROUGH ITS AIRFRAME. AT 2,000 FEET, WEBLEY DRAGGED THE VIBRATING BOMBER OUT OF ITS DIVE. THE ENEMY HAD BROKEN AWAY...

TIME SOMETHING WAS DONE ABOUT THESE HAND-OPERATED GUN-TURRETS, SKIPPER... BY THE TIME I'D LUGGED THEM ROUND AND GOT A BEAD ON THAT JERRY, THE SHOW WAS OVER!

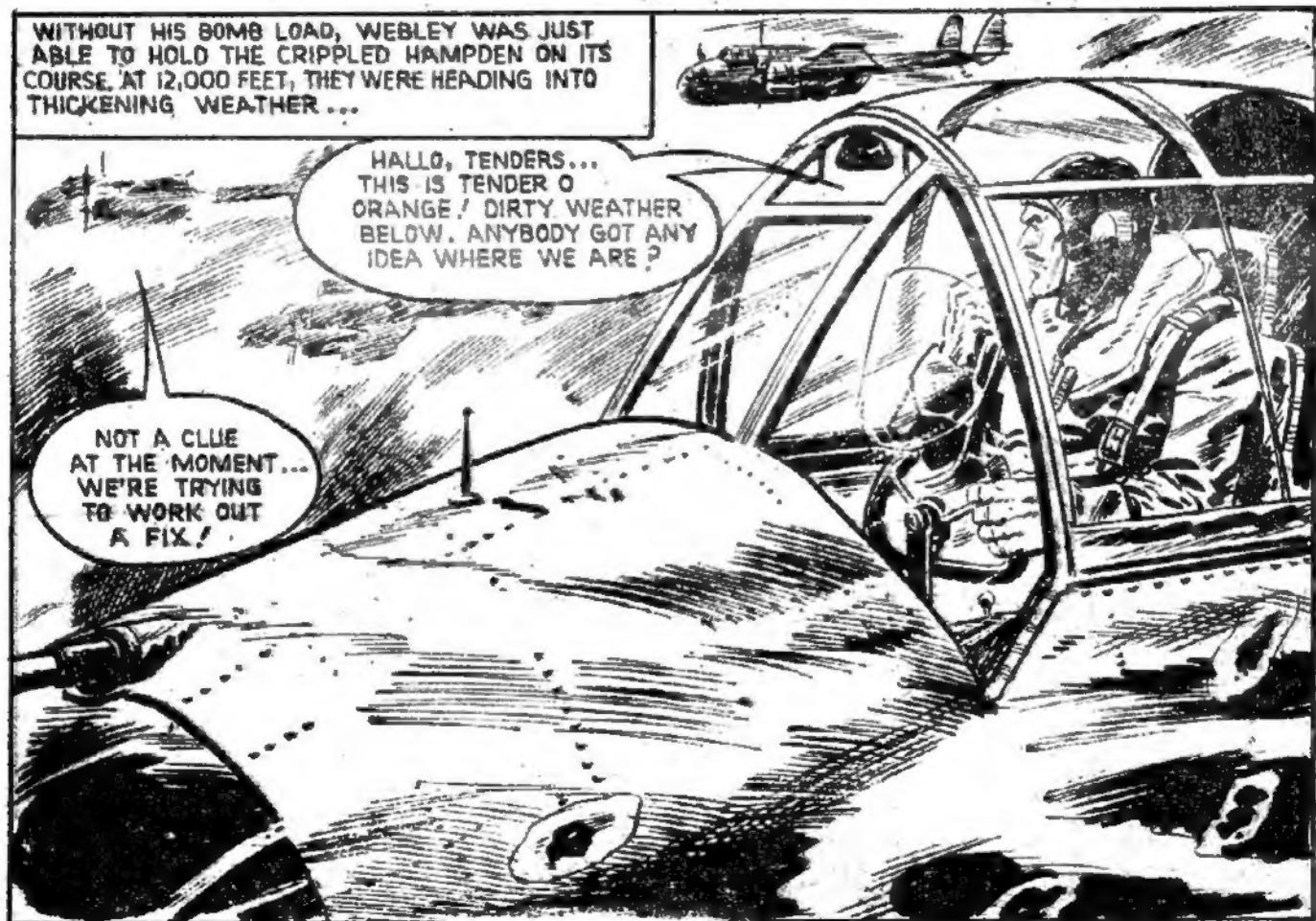
I COULDN'T AGREE MORE! THE RUDDER CONTROL HAS BEEN SHOT UP... OIL PRESSURE IS DROPPING ON THE PORT ENGINE. WE'VE GOT TO MAKE HEIGHT IF WE WANT TO SEE BASE!

## Raven Over Berlin.

AS HIS DAMAGED MACHINE ROARED NORTHWARDS, STRIVING TO KEEP ITS HEIGHT, WEBLEY CALLED UP THE REST OF THE SQUADRON ON HIS R.T. ... AND SOON THEY WERE FLYING IN CLOSE FORMATION. WEBLEY TOOK STOCK OF THEIR CASUALTIES ...



WITHOUT HIS BOMB LOAD, WEBLEY WAS JUST ABLE TO HOLD THE CRIPPLED HAMPDEN ON ITS COURSE. AT 12,000 FEET, THEY WERE HEADING INTO THICKENING WEATHER ...



## Raven Over Berlin



## Raven Over Berlin

BUT THEIR WIND DRIFT WAS NOT NEARLY AS GREAT AS THE NAVIGATOR HAD IMAGINED. IT WAS NOT THE DUTCH COAST BELOW... IT WAS THE NORTH SEA. THE HAMPDENS WERE ALREADY MORE THAN HALF-WAY HOME. AND IN THE OPERATION ROOM OF BRITISH FIGHTER COMMAND ...

SEEMS LIKE A PACK OF BANDITS ALL RIGHT... AND THEY'RE MOVING IN TOWARDS THE COAST IN A BUSINESS-LIKE FASHION! ANY IDENTIFICATION SIGNALS?

WE AREN'T PICKING UP I.F.P. FROM THEM, SIR... AND THEY'RE WELL WITHIN RADAR RANGE!



THE FIGHTER CONTROLLER REACHED FOR THE TELEPHONE...

WELL, I THINK IT'S PRETTY CERTAIN WHAT THEY ARE... WE'LL CALL OUT EIGHT-O-ONE SQUADRON ...

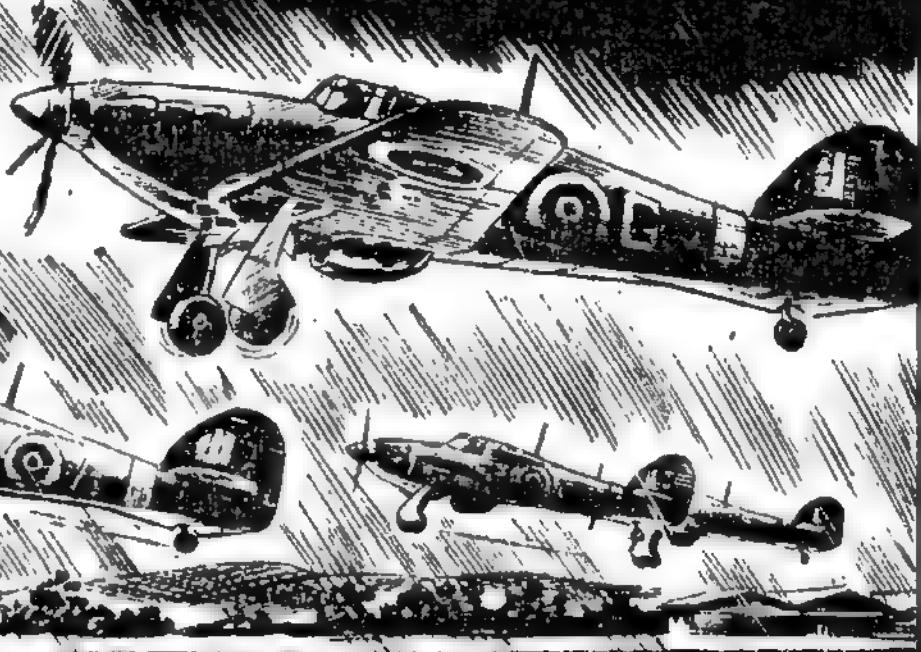
HALLO, REDCOATS... HALLO, REDCOATS! SCRAMBLES! BANDITS APPROACHING TWO-SEVEN-O, ANGELS TWELVE! BUSTER!



## Rayen Over Berlin

WITHIN THREE MINUTES OF THE "SCRAMBLE" CALL THE HURRICANES OF 801 SQUADRON WERE HURTLED SKYWARDS ...

HALLO,  
RED FANTAIL ... WHEN  
WE BREAK CLOUD, TAKE  
YOUR BOYS INTO THE SUN  
WHILE WE MAKE OUR  
APPROACH AT ANGELS  
TWELVE !



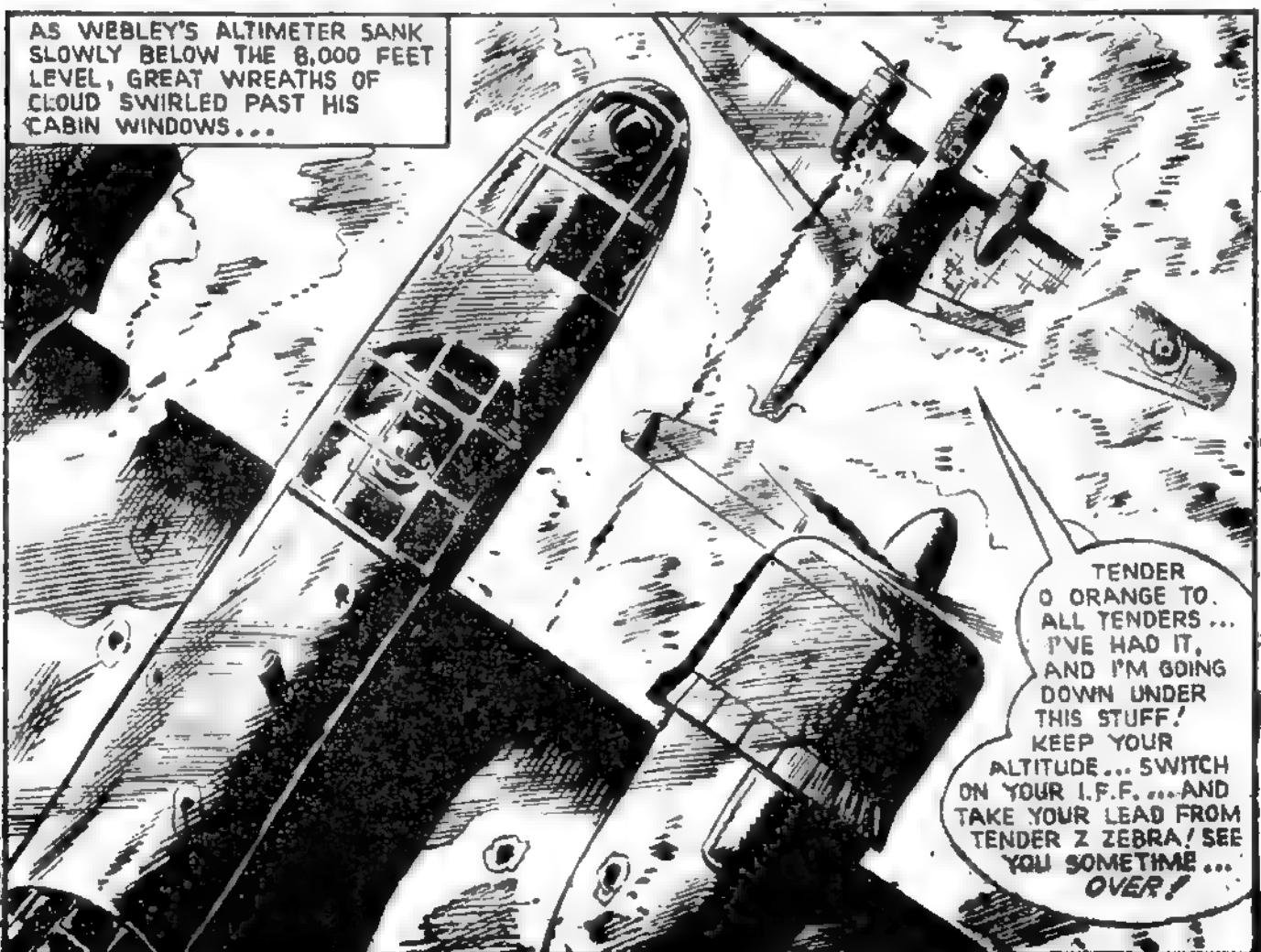
THE CLIMBING HURRICANE SQUADRON DIVIDED INTO TWO SECTIONS ... ONE SECTION CLIMBING ON TO 20,000 FEET, AND THE OTHER LEVELLING OFF AT 12,000 ...

RED FANTAIL TO YELLOW LEADER. WE'VE GOT A GOOD VIEW FROM UP HERE! BANDITS DEAD AHEAD AND SKIPPING THE CLOUDS! THIS IS GOING TO BE SOME PARTY!

YELLOW LEADER TO RED FANTAIL ... KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN FOR ME. ONE-O-NINES. IT'S AN OLD HUN TRUCK!



## Raven Over Berlin



## Raven Over Berlin

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IT WAS AT THAT MOMENT THE HURRICANES ROCKETED IN FOR THE KILL... AND SQUADRON-LEADER CARVER, YELLOW LEADER, GAZED DOWN ON THE CLOUD-DIMMED SHAPES THAT WERE HIS TARGETS ...

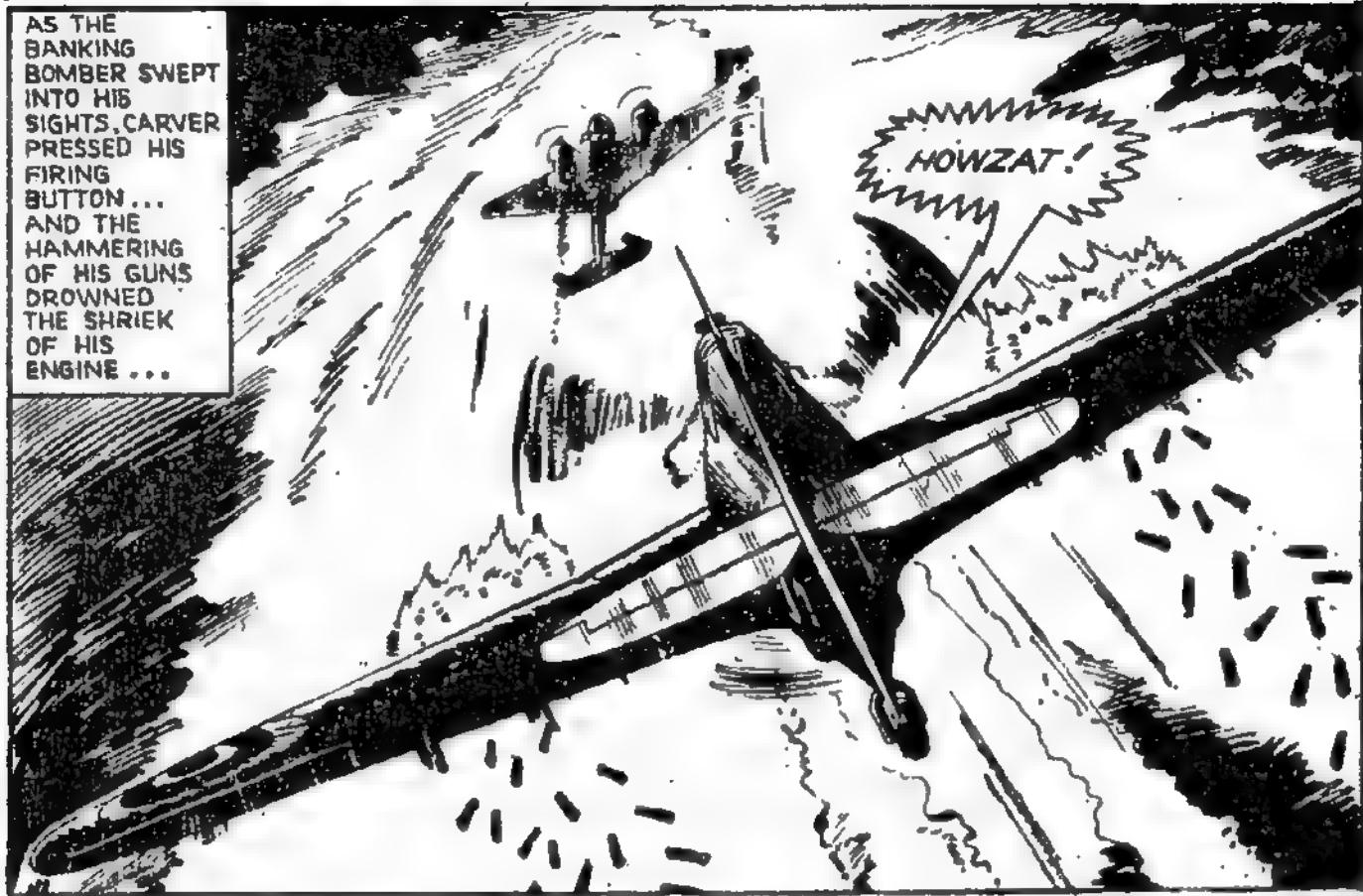
CHAPS, I THINK WE'VE GOT A FLOCK OF DORNIER TWO-ONE-FIVES... I'M GOING TO SETTLE WITH THEIR LEADER BEFORE HE DODGES ANY DEEPER INTO THE MURK! TAKE YOUR PICK... AND TALLYHO!

AT THAT INSTANT, WEBLEY WENT INTO A BANKING DIVE...

Skipper  
To crew...  
Hold on to  
your hats!  
We're going  
down  
under...

Skipper!  
Fighters  
on our  
tail!

## Raven Over Berlin



THE URGENT MESSAGE OF RECALL WAS FLASHED OUT TO THE DISTANT HURRICANES ...

COME IN, RED LEADER AND YELLOW LEADER, EIGHT-O-ONE HURRICANE SQUADRON. STOP ATTACK... REPEAT STOP ATTACK! THERE HAS BEEN AN ERROR... THE BANDITS ARE HAMPDENS, REPEAT, HAMPDENS! DO NOT ATTACK!



BUT IT WAS TOO LATE! THE HURRICANES WERE ALREADY ATTACKING. AS THE SPLIT-SECOND WARNING OF HIS REAR-UPPER GUNNER REACHED HIS EARS, WEBLEY KICKED VIOLENTLY ON THE RUDDER, AND THE HAMPDEN SLEWED INTO A TIGHT TURN.



AS THE HAMPDEN SHUDDERED ROUND INTO THE SAFETY OF THE CLOUDS, THE ATTACKING HURRICANE STREAKED OVERHEAD ...



## Raven Over Berlin



## Raven Over Berlin.

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WEBLEY HAD SEEN NOTHING OF THE DISASTER TO HIS SQUADRON... BUT HIS REAR-GUNNER HAD. CARVER, GIRLING FAR ABOVE, SAW THE SOLITARY HAMPDEN, AND HE SENT HIS HURRICANE INTO A POWER DIVE TOWARDS IT.

WHAT IN THE NAME OF PITY IS HAPPENING, REAR-GUNNER?

IT'S APPALLING, SKIPPER! THE SQUADRON'S BEEN SHOT TO PIECES!

HERE COMES THAT HURRICANE AGAIN... IT'S DIVING ON US FROM TWELVE O'CLOCK!

AN INSTANT LATER, CARVER'S HURRICANE SCREAMED ALONGSIDE THE BOMBER, THROTTLED BACK, AND FLEW WING TO WING WITH IT...

IT WOULD BE A STUPID HAMPDEN! WHY DIDN'T THEY HAVE THEIR I.F.F. FUNCTIONING?

SKIPPER... LET ME GIVE THAT MURDERING SWINE JUST ONE SHORT LITTLE BURST...

HOLD YOUR FIRE, GUNNER... THERE'S BEEN ENOUGH DAMAGE DONE!

## Raven Over Berlin

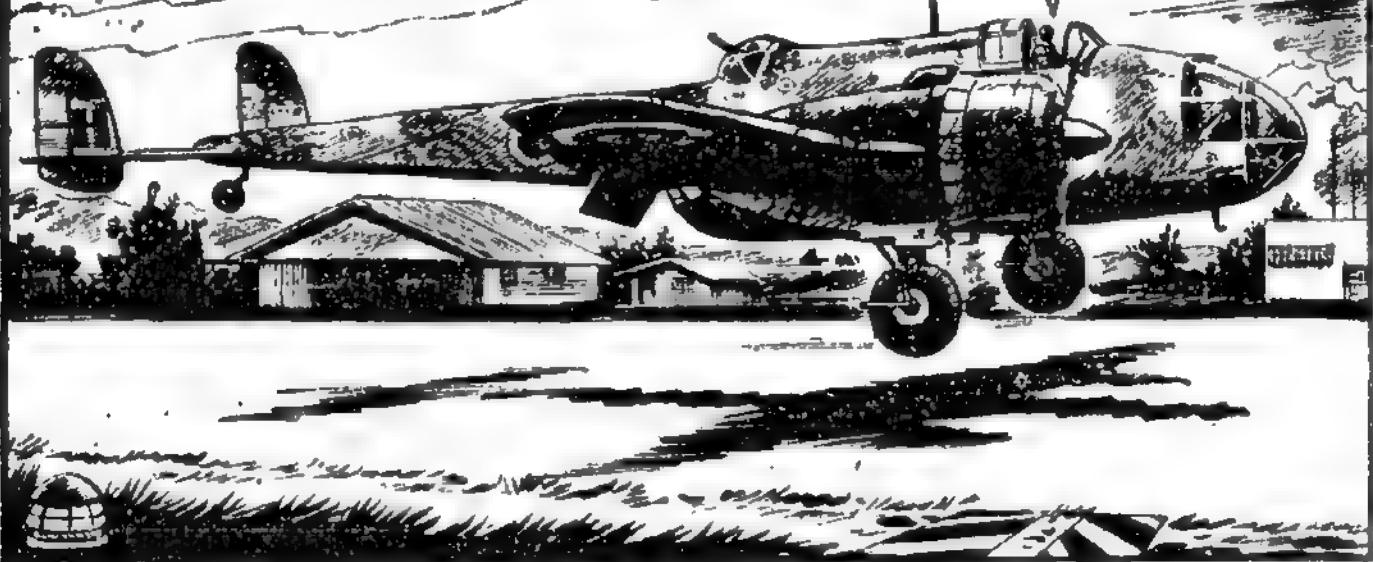
SUDDENLY THE HURRICANE PEELED AWAY, AND WAS GONE. WEBLEY DROPPED THE BIG BOMBER INTO THE CLOUD, ANXIOUSLY WATCHING THE ALTIMETER AS IT FLICKERED SLOWLY BACK. AT 2,000 FEET HE SAW BENEATH HIM, NOT THE NORTH SEA, BUT THE GREEN LANDSCAPE OF EASTERN ENGLAND ...



AND SO, TWENTY MINUTES LATER, THE SOLITARY HAMPDEN, SOLE SURVIVOR OF ITS SQUADRON, CAME LIMPING INTO BASE, WITH WEBLEY BROODING AT THE CONTROLS IN HIS LONELY CABIN...

IT WAS THE SORT OF ACCIDENT THAT COULD HAPPEN TO ANYBODY IN WAR, SIR!

I DON'T SEE IT THAT WAY, NAVIGATOR. THE SAFETY OF THE SQUADRON WAS MY RESPONSIBILITY... IT WAS MY BUSINESS TO KNOW EXACTLY WHERE WE WERE, EVEN IF IT MEANT STOOGING AROUND AT TREE-TOP HEIGHT... I SHOULDN'T HAVE TAKEN CHANCES ON YOUR FIGURES.



AT DISPERSAL, THE STATION ADJUTANT WAS WAITING, AND ONE LOOK AT WEBLEY'S FACE TOLD HIM THE MAGNITUDE OF THE DISASTER.

IT LOOKS VERY SERIOUS, SIR... NONE OF THE OTHERS HAVE RETURNED! H.Q. HAVE BEEN YELLING DOWN THE PHONE FOR THE LAST HALF HOUR! IT SEEMS THAT FIGHTER CONTROL SET EIGHT-O-ONE SQUADRON ON TO YOU BECAUSE THEY COULDN'T PICK UP YOUR I.F.F.

SO IT WAS EIGHT-O-ONE SQUADRON. THAT'S ALL I WANTED TO KNOW... SEND ME THE WARRANT OFFICER IN CHARGE OF STORES...



## Raven Over Berlin

WHITE-FACED AND GRIM, WEBLEY ISSUED TERSE AND STRANGE ORDERS. THERE WAS A LOT OF UNUSUAL ACTIVITY ROUND THE BOMB BAYS OF HIS HAMPDEN... AND FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER, HE AND HIS CREW WERE AIRBORNE AGAIN.

THAT MACHINE'S ALMOST HAD IT... IT SHOULDN'T BE FLYING!

IT'S THE C.O. ... HE'S GONE AS MAD AS A HATTER! HE MADE US FILL THE BOMB BAYS WITH ALL THE AIRCRAFT RECOGNITION MANUALS ON THE STATION!



WITH BOMB BAYS OPEN, THE HAMPDEN CAME ROARING IN LOW ABOVE THE RUNWAYS OF BOI HURRICANE SQUADRON... AND ...

GET GEMMED UP ON THESE, YOU TRIGGER-HAPPY APES, BEFORE YOU EVER FLY ANOTHER OPERATION!



## Raven Over Berlin

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WHEN THE HURRICANE PILOTS OF BO1 SQUADRON SAW THE LITTER OF AIRCRAFT RECOGNITION MANUALS THAT STRADDLED THE AIRFIELD, THEY KNEW EXACTLY WHAT WEBLEY MEANT, AND HOW HE FELT...

THAT MUST HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE SURVIVORS FROM OUR MURDER MISSION, CARVER... HE'S CERTAINLY GONE OUT OF HIS WAY TO MAKE HIS POINT!

IT WAS A BAD BUSINESS, SIR... BUT WE REALLY WEREN'T TO BLAME! THE HAMPDEN LEADER SHOULD HAVE USED HIS L.F.F. AT THE RIGHT TIME!



HALF AN HOUR LATER CARVER BROUGHT HIS HURRICANE DOWN ON THE GRIMLY DESERTED RUNWAY OF WEBLEY'S HAMPDEN STATION ...

THIS IS A MISSION I'D RATHER NOT HAVE... BUT SINCE I LED THE SQUADRON THAT SHOT THEM DOWN ...

GREAT HEAVENS... IT'S A HURRICANE! IN THE OLD MAN'S PRESENT STATE OF MIND, THIS BLOKE WOULD HAVE BEEN WISER TO STAY AWAY!

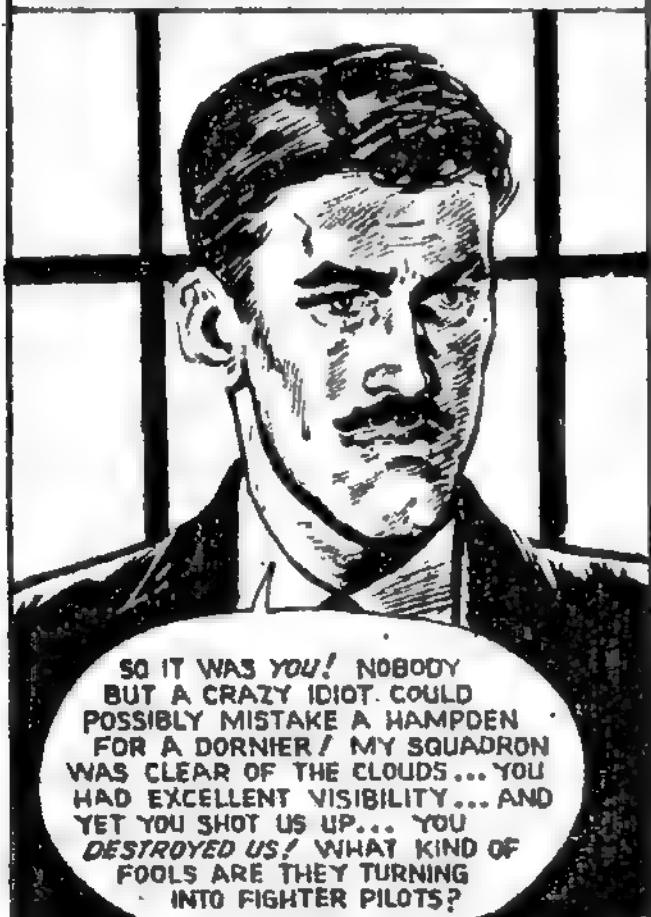


## Raven Over Berlin

CARVER MADE HIS WAY TO THE C.O.'S OFFICE ... HE FOUND A TENSE, HAGGARD MAN AT THE WINDOW WAITING FOR HIM ...



WEBLEY STIFFENED ... AND HIS EYES BORED GRIMLY INTO CARVER'S FACE ...

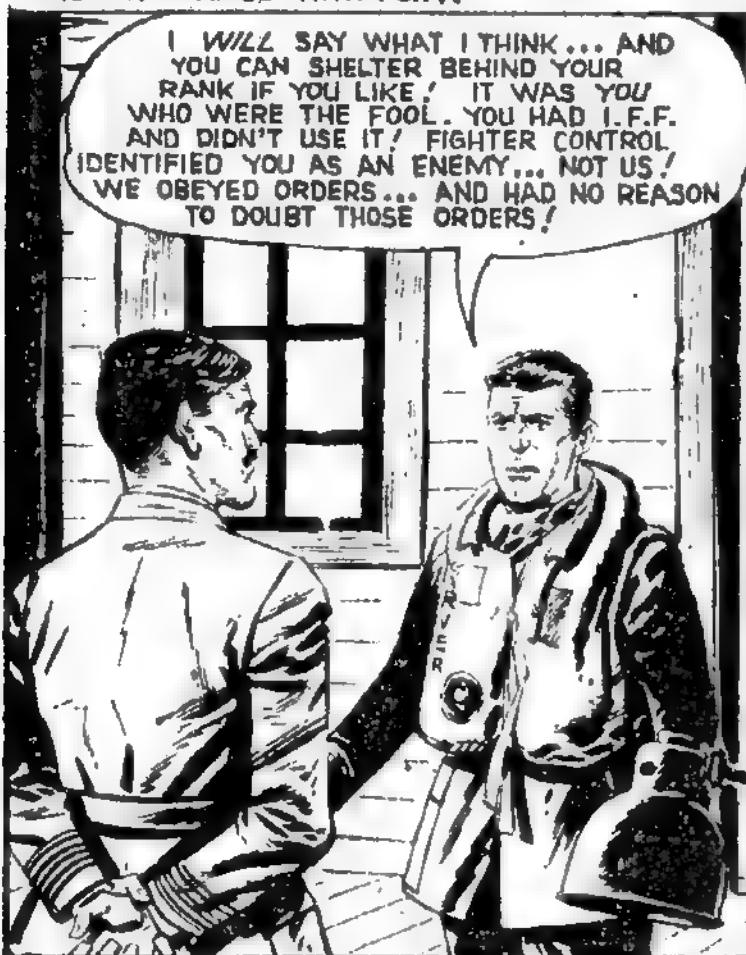


AS CARVER REACTED HOTLY TO THE SLUR, WEBLEY CUT ACROSS HIS WORDS LIKE A WHIPLASH ...

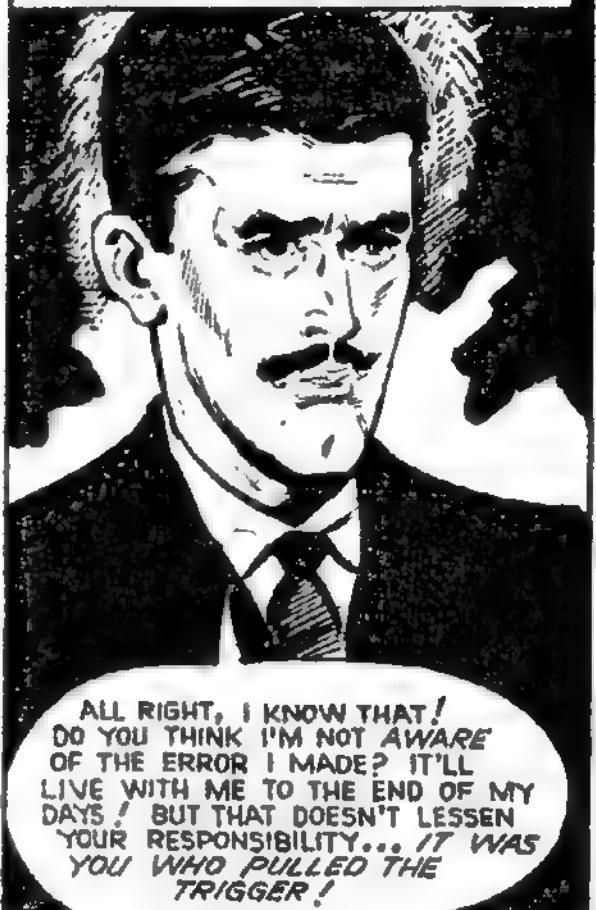


BUT WEBLEY HAD GONE TOO FAR, AND CARVER'S VOICE WAS TENSE WITH FURY.

I WILL SAY WHAT I THINK... AND YOU CAN SHELTER BEHIND YOUR RANK IF YOU LIKE! IT WAS YOU WHO WERE THE FOOL. YOU HAD I.F.F. AND DIDN'T USE IT! FIGHTER CONTROL IDENTIFIED YOU AS AN ENEMY... NOT US! WE OBEYED ORDERS... AND HAD NO REASON TO DOUBT THOSE ORDERS!



WEBLEY'S ANGER COLLAPSED AND IT SEEMED TO CARVER THAT HE WAS FACING A MAN SUDDENLY AGED.



ALL RIGHT, I KNOW THAT! DO YOU THINK I'M NOT AWARE OF THE ERROR I MADE? IT'LL LIVE WITH ME TO THE END OF MY DAYS! BUT THAT DOESN'T LESSEN YOUR RESPONSIBILITY... IT WAS YOU WHO PULLED THE TRIGGER!

ABRUPTLY, CARVER HAD HAD ENOUGH... AND HE TURNED ON HIS HEEL, AND LEFT WEBLEY ALONE.

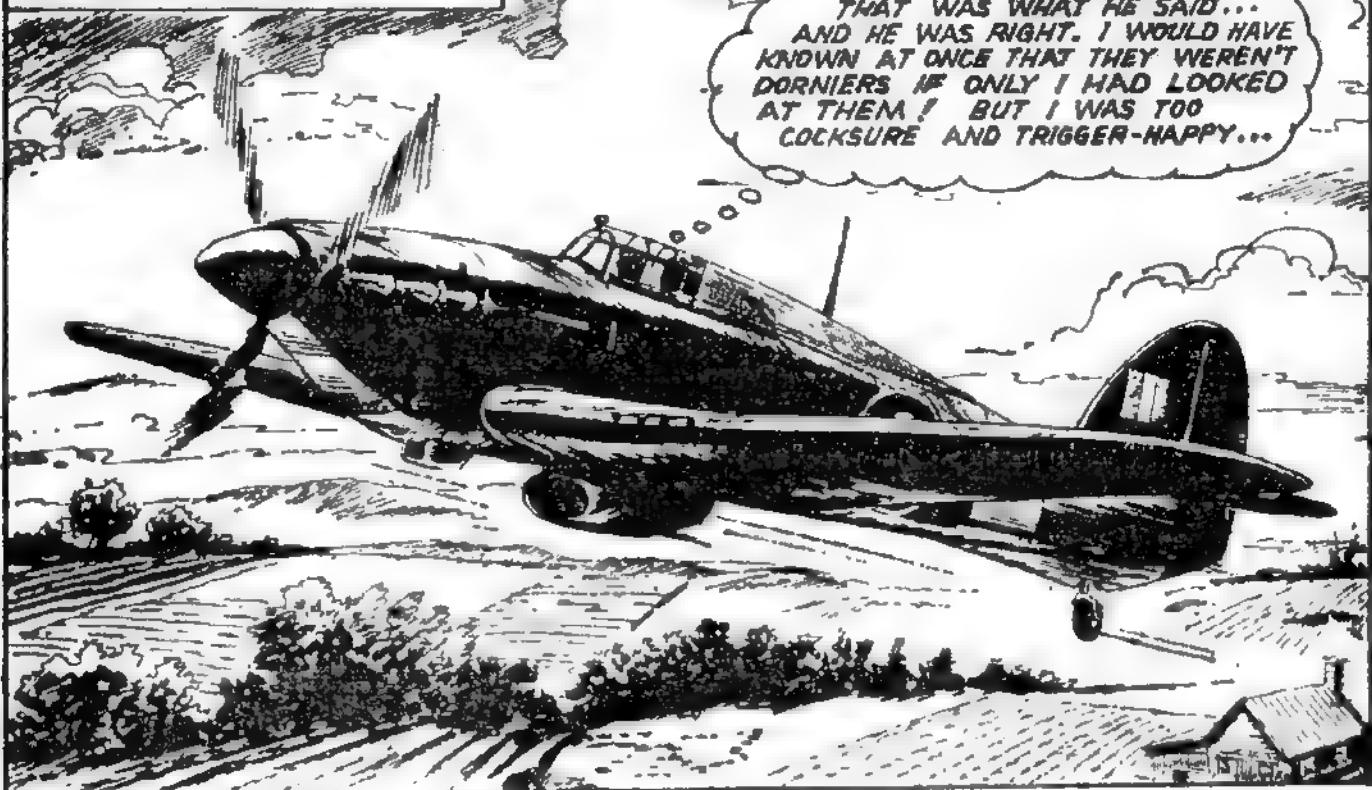
I SUPPOSE I'M A SWINE! I TOOK IT OUT OF THAT YOUNG MAN JUST TO EASE THE BURDEN ON MY OWN MIND! IT WAS EXACTLY AS HE SAID... HE WAS ONLY OBEYING ORDERS! THE ONLY JOKER IN THE PACK WAS ME!



## Rover Over Berlin

BUT CARVER, TOO, WAS ALONE WITH HIS THOUGHTS, AS HIS HURRICANE CLIMBED HIGH INTO THE LIGHT OF THE SETTING SUN ...

'IT WAS YOU WHO PULLED THE TRIGGER' ... THAT WAS WHAT HE SAID ... AND HE WAS RIGHT. I WOULD HAVE KNOWN AT ONCE THAT THEY WEREN'T DORNIERS IF ONLY I HAD LOOKED AT THEM! BUT I WAS TOO COCKSURE AND TRIGGER-HAPPY ...



IT WAS DUSK WHEN WEBLEY FINALLY LEFT HIS OFFICE. DEEP IN THOUGHT, HE WALKED SLOWLY ROUND THE PERIMETER TRACK OF THE AIRFIELD ... UNTIL HE REACHED HIS HAMPDEN.

SHE WAS A FINE MACHINE ... BUT I'LL NEVER FLY HER AGAIN! AFTER THIS, I COULD NEVER FACE A SQUADRON OF OPERATIONAL PILOTS. I MUST TRANSFER TO A GROUND JOB. IN ANY CASE, THEY'LL HOLD A COURT OF ENQUIRY, AND I'LL PROBABLY GET KICKED OUT ...

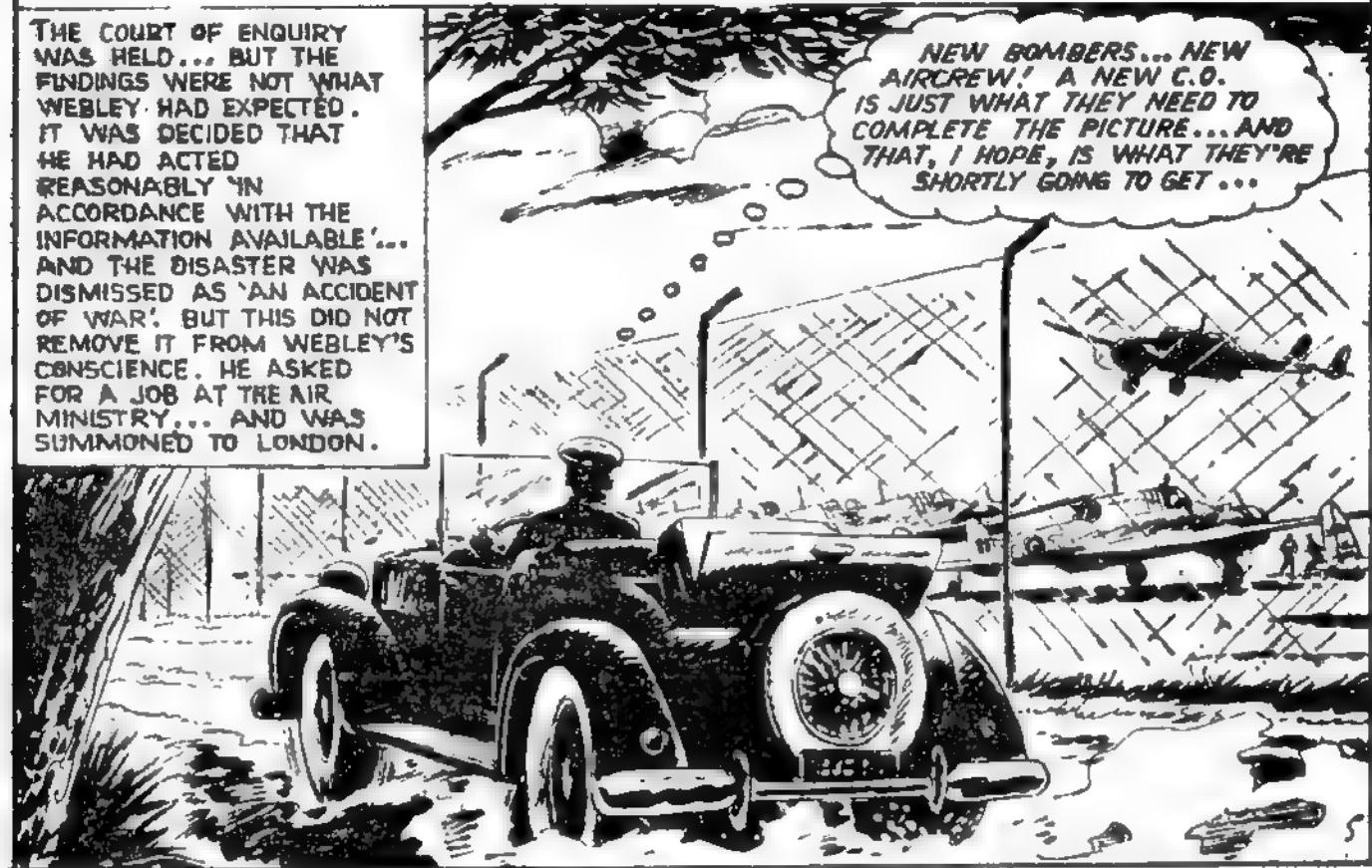


## Chapter 2.

## NEW COMMAND

THE COURT OF ENQUIRY WAS HELD... BUT THE FINDINGS WERE NOT WHAT WEBLEY HAD EXPECTED. IT WAS DECIDED THAT HE HAD ACTED REASONABLY 'IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE'... AND THE DISASTER WAS DISMISSED AS 'AN ACCIDENT OF WAR'. BUT THIS DID NOT REMOVE IT FROM WEBLEY'S CONSCIENCE. HE ASKED FOR A JOB AT THE AIR MINISTRY... AND WAS SUMMONED TO LONDON.

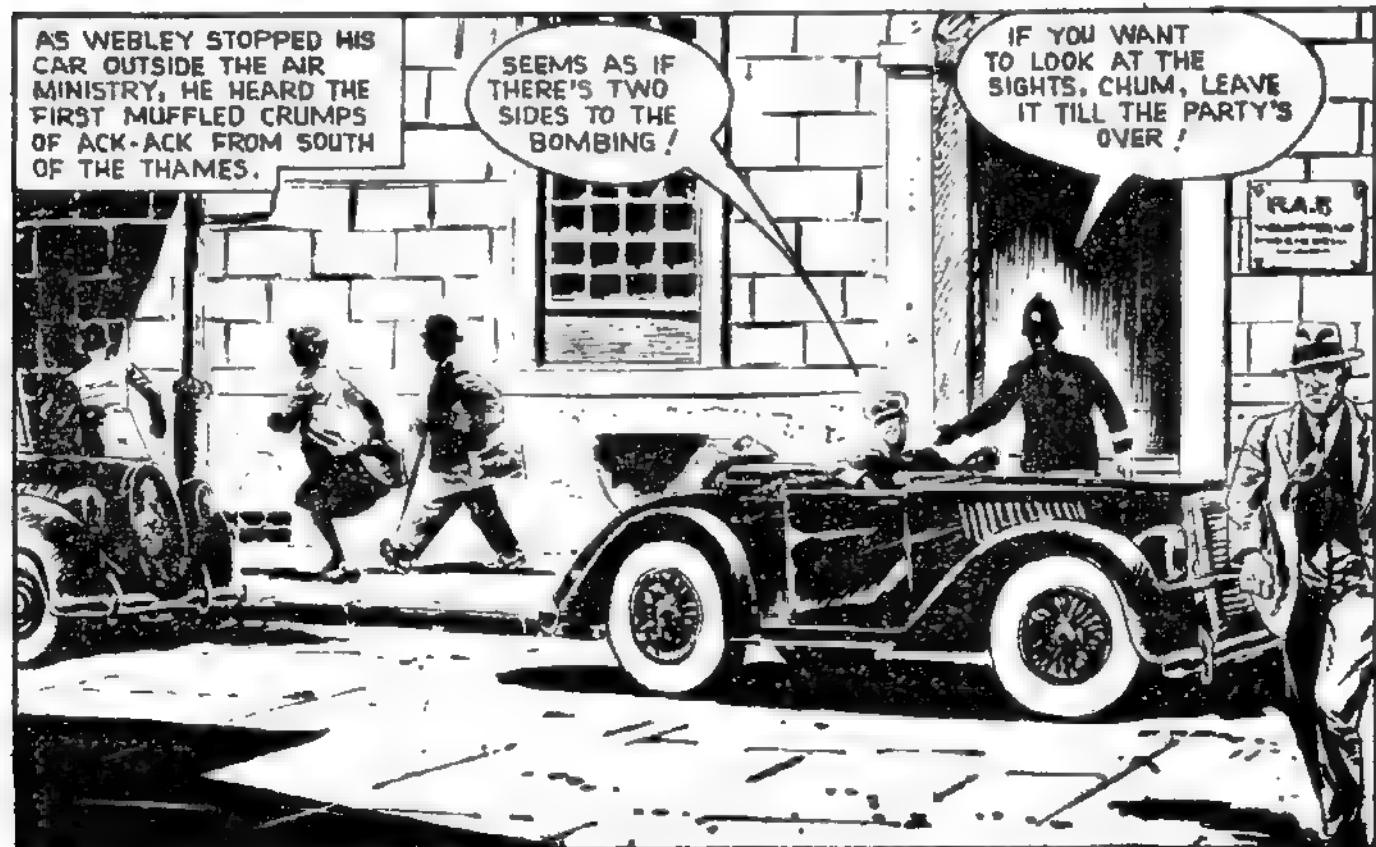
NEW BOMBERS... NEW AIRCREW! A NEW C.O. IS JUST WHAT THEY NEED TO COMPLETE THE PICTURE... AND THAT, I HOPE, IS WHAT THEY'RE SHORTLY GOING TO GET...



AS WEBLEY STOPPED HIS CAR OUTSIDE THE AIR MINISTRY, HE HEARD THE FIRST MUFFLED CRUMPS OF ACK-ACK FROM SOUTH OF THE THAMES.

SEEMS AS IF THERE'S TWO SIDES TO THE BOMBING!

IF YOU WANT TO LOOK AT THE SIGHTS, CHUM, LEAVE IT TILL THE PARTY'S OVER!





USHER WAS A GRUFF, DYNAMIC MAN WHO EXPRESSED HIMSELF EXPLOSIVELY...

QUITE RIGHT, SIR... BUT THEY'RE TRYING PRECISION BOMBING IN SQUADRONS, THE SAME AS WE ARE DOING!

EH? WHAT THE DEVIL DO YOU KNOW ABOUT IT? YOU'RE JUST A STAFF OFFICER!

YOUR MISTAKE, SIR... I'M AN OPERATIONAL C.O., AND I'VE BEEN HITTING THE RUHR THREE TIMES WEEKLY FOR THE LAST THREE MONTHS... SO I DO KNOW A LITTLE ABOUT IT!

THE DYNAMIC AIR VICE-MARSHAL LOWERED HIS BINOCULARS, AND SWUNG ROUND TO STARE AT THE YOUNGER MAN.

SO YOU'RE AN OPERATIONAL JOHNNIE... WELL, WEBLEY, IF YOU WERE GOERING, HOW WOULD YOU SET ABOUT FLATTENING LONDON DOCKS, EH?

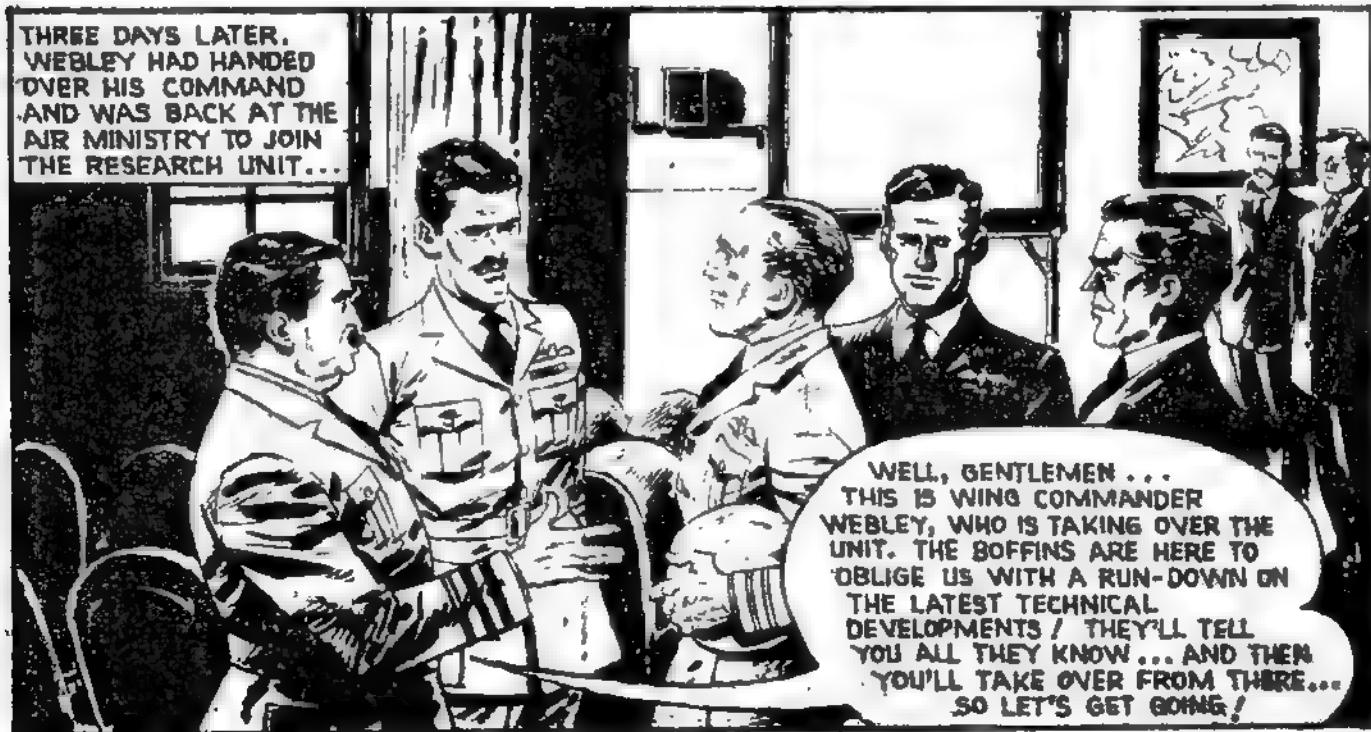
I'D DO THREE THINGS, SIR. FIRST, I'D USE FOUR-ENGINED BOMBERS CARRYING HEAVY LOADS. SECONDLY, I'D EMPLOY THEM MASSIVELY, HUNDREDS AT A TIME, AND THIRDLY I'D USE CARPET BOMBING, ON THE SAME PRINCIPLES AS AN ARTILLERY BARRAGE. THAT IS THE ONLY WAY TO FLATTEN AN INDUSTRIAL TARGET...

WEBLEY HAD VERY DEFINITE THEORIES ON THE ROLE OF BOMBER COMMAND IN THE WAR.

I AGREE WITH YOU! WE'RE DOING A LOT OF PLANNING AT THE MOMENT... BUT WE CAN TALK ABOUT THAT LATER. THE QUESTION IS... WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I APPLIED FOR A STAFF JOB, SIR. YOU ASKED ME TO COME AND SEE YOU...

## Raven Over Berlin



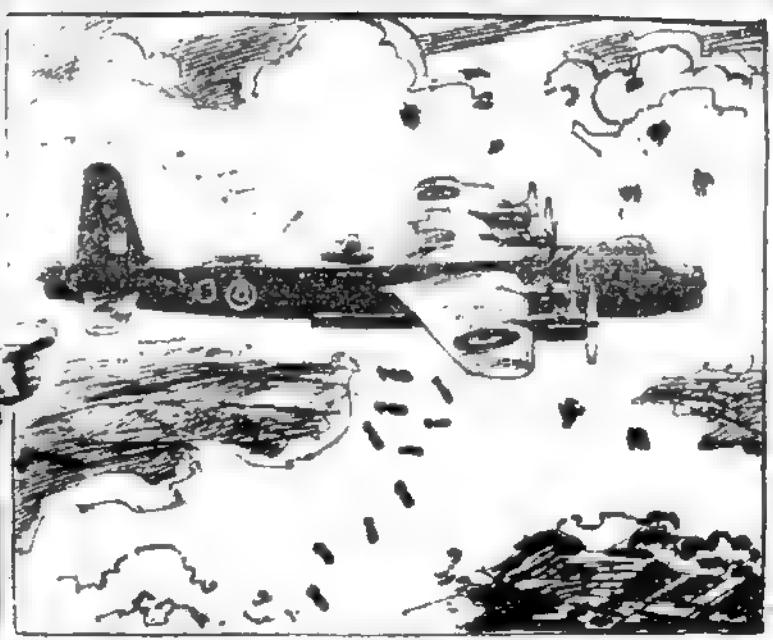
FOR WEBLEY AND HIS TEAM, THE NEXT WEEK COMPRISED A CONSTANT ROUND OF LECTURES, FILM SHOWS, AND DISCUSSIONS.

... UP TO NOW, GENTLEMEN, WE HAVE BOMBED STRATEGIC TARGETS, RAILWAY COMMUNICATIONS, DOCKYARDS, AND MILITARY POSITIONS. BUT THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE WAR TO BE CARRIED INTO THE INDUSTRIAL HEART OF THE GERMAN WAR EFFORT... THE RUHR VALLEY...



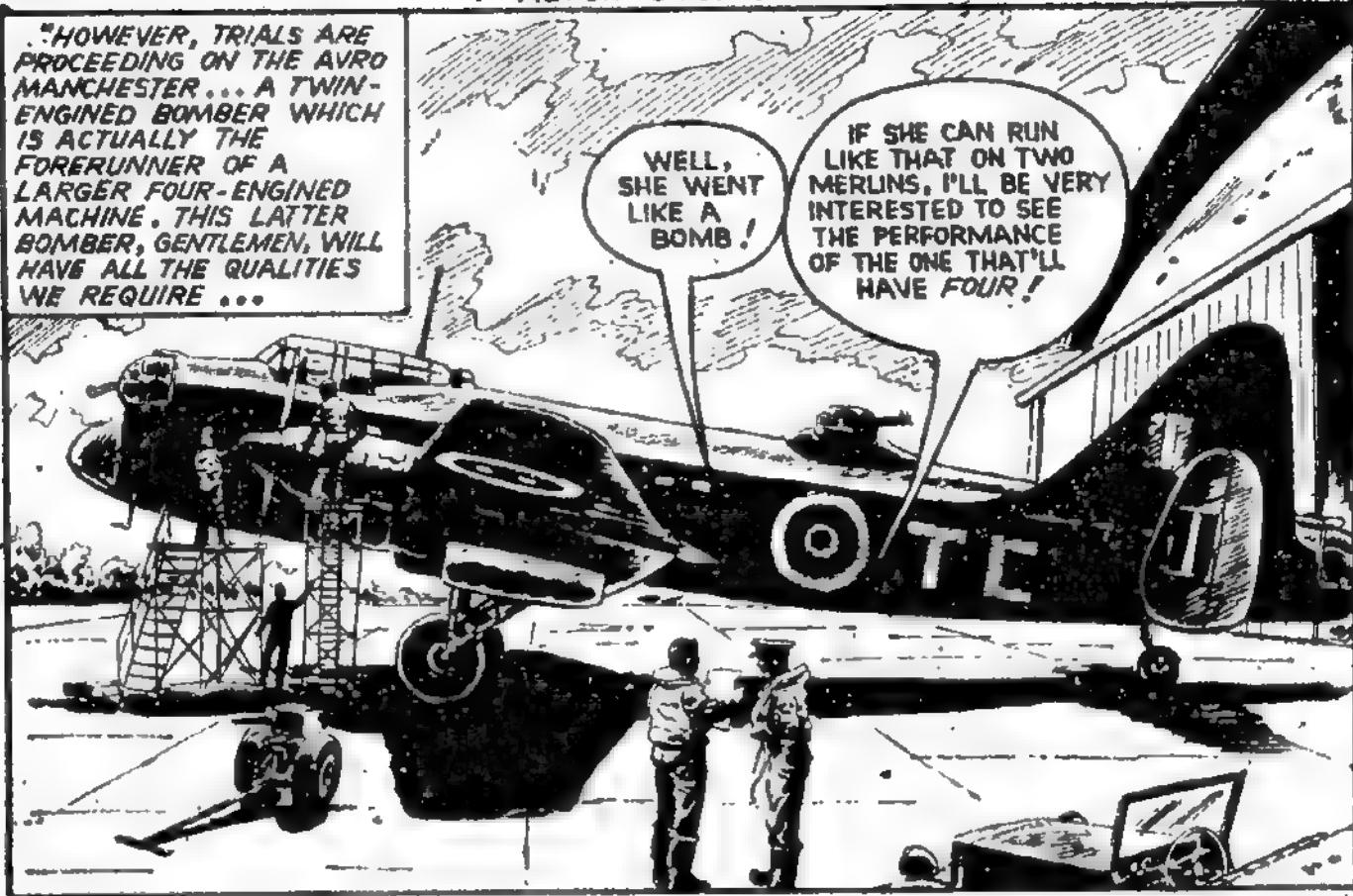
WEBLEY SHUDDERED AS HE THOUGHT WHAT THE FORMIDABLE RUHR DEFENCES WOULD DO TO THE OBSOLETE AIRCRAFT WHICH WERE AT PRESENT OPERATING...

THE AIRCRAFT YOU SEE HERE IS THE MOST EFFICIENT HEAVY BOMBER IN SERVICE TODAY. BUT WE HAVEN'T ENOUGH OF THEM YET... AND IN ANY CASE, THE STIRLING ISN'T FAST ENOUGH TO BREACH THE RUHR FLAK BARRIER! WE NEED MORE MANOEUVRABLE MACHINES, CAPABLE OF GREATER ALTITUDE...



## Raven Over Berlin.

"HOWEVER, TRIALS ARE PROCEEDING ON THE AVRO MANCHESTER... A TWIN-ENGINED BOMBER WHICH IS ACTUALLY THE FORERUNNER OF A LARGER FOUR-ENGINED MACHINE. THIS LATTER BOMBER, GENTLEMEN, WILL HAVE ALL THE QUALITIES WE REQUIRE ..."



AND SO THE BOMBING RESEARCH UNIT DISCUSSED EXISTING BOMBING TECHNIQUES ...

NOW, GENTLEMEN... WITH THE EXISTING TECHNIQUE OF 'PRECISION' BOMBING, THE NAVIGATOR HAS TO DIRECT THE PILOT, REGARDLESS OF FLAK OR ENEMY FIGHTERS. OFTEN ALL THE EFFORT OF REACHING THE TARGET AREA IS WASTED ...!



## Raven Over Berlin.

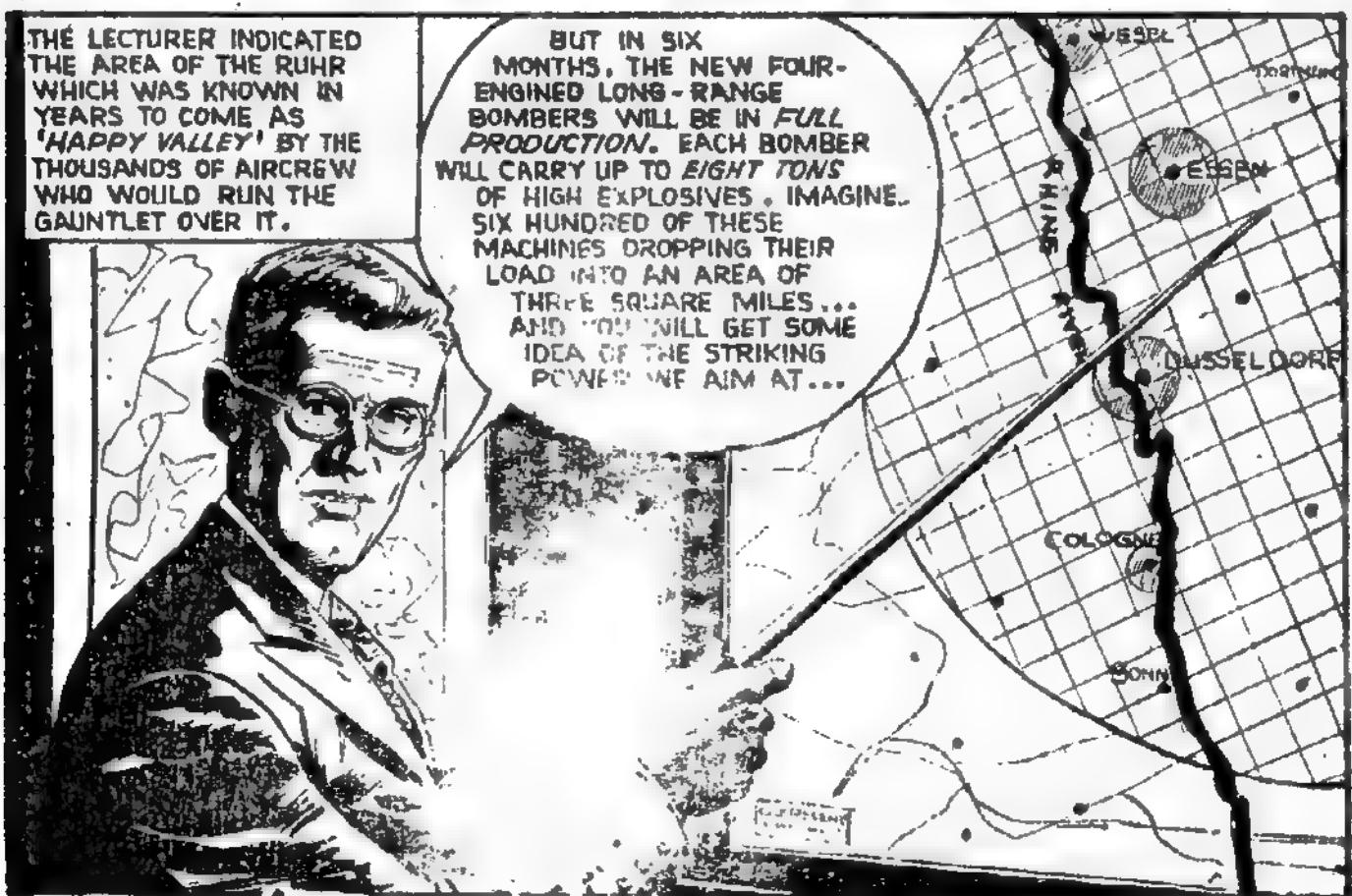
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"ACCURATE BOMBING HAS BEEN MORE OF AN ART THAN A SCIENCE. RAIDS HAVE BEEN MADE ON SPECIAL TARGETS BY A FEW DOZEN AIRCRAFT... AND GROUND DEFENCES AND FIGHTERS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CONCENTRATE. LOSSES HAVE BEEN HEAVY; AND RESULTS HAVE BEEN POOR..."

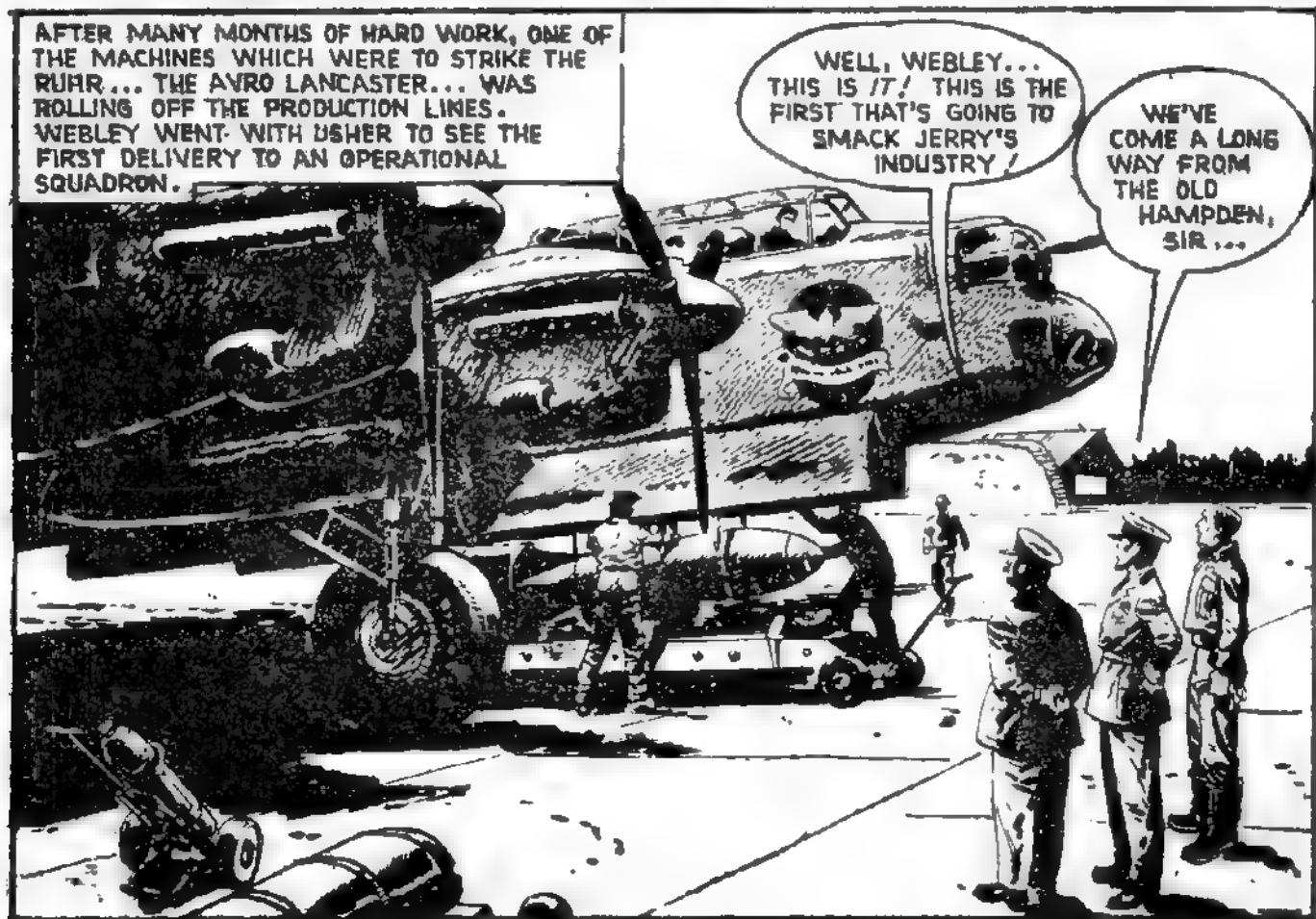


THE LECTURER INDICATED THE AREA OF THE RUHR WHICH WAS KNOWN IN YEARS TO COME AS 'HAPPY VALLEY' BY THE THOUSANDS OF AIRCREW WHO WOULD RUN THE GAUNTLET OVER IT.

BUT IN SIX MONTHS, THE NEW FOUR-ENGINED LONG-RANGE BOMBERS WILL BE IN FULL PRODUCTION. EACH BOMBER WILL CARRY UP TO EIGHT TONS OF HIGH EXPLOSIVES. IMAGINE SIX HUNDRED OF THESE MACHINES DROPPING THEIR LOAD INTO AN AREA OF THREE SQUARE MILES... AND YOU WILL GET SOME IDEA OF THE STRIKING POWER WE AIM AT...



## Raven Over Berlin



## Raven Over Berlin

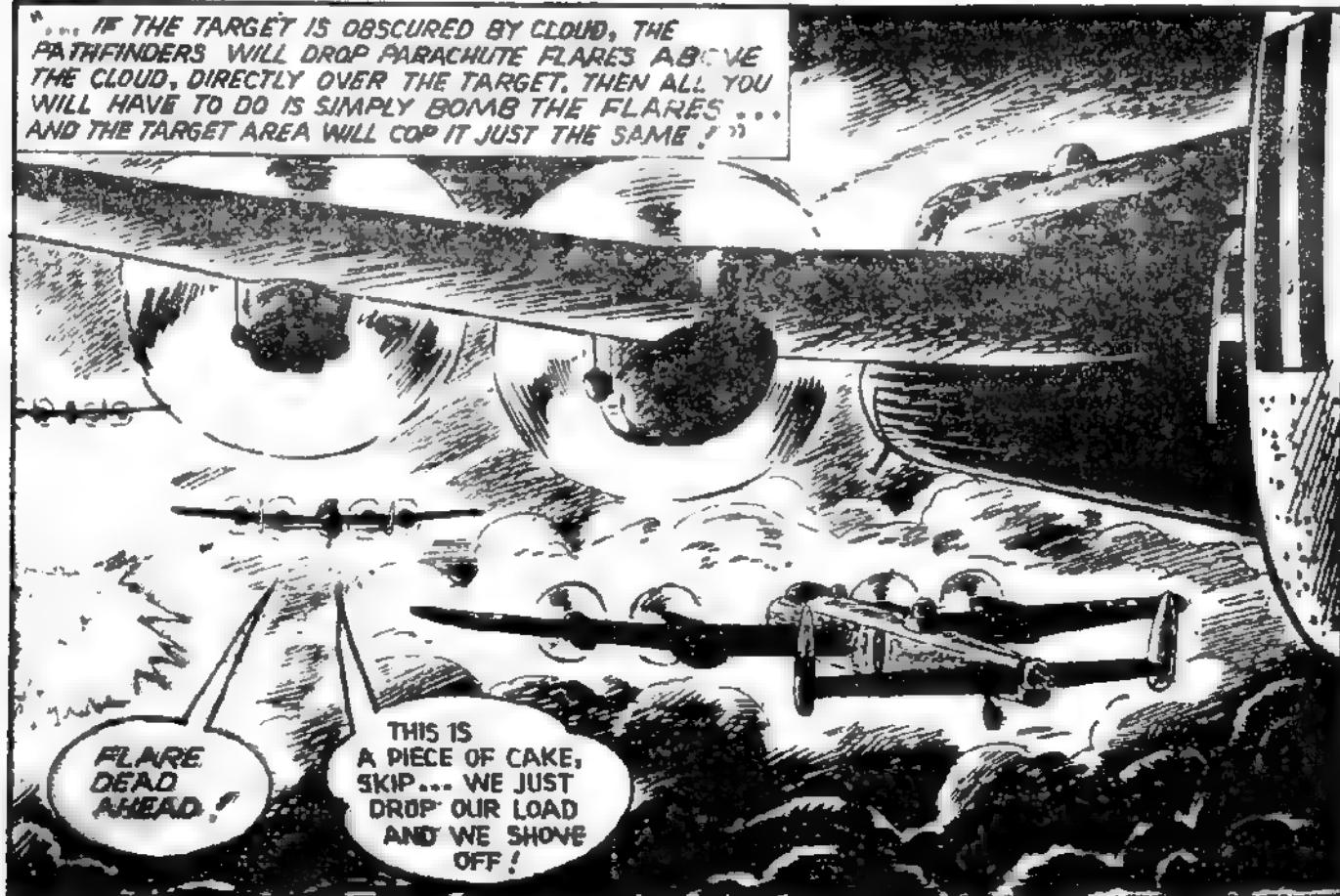
AND SO THE FIRST MASS RAID WITH THE NEW LANCASTERS WAS PLANNED, A CONCENTRATION OF A THOUSAND BOMBERS ON COLOGNE. WEBLEY AND HIS TEAM WENT ROUND THE SQUADRONS BEFOREHAND HAMMERING HOME THE NEW TECHNIQUES...

THE PATHFINDERS WILL GO IN FIRST... THEY WILL DROP GREEN PHOSPHORUS MARKERS ROUND THE TARGET AREA... AND THEY WILL DROP RED TARGET INDICATORS IN THE DEAD CENTRE. NOW THIS IS THE POINT YOU MUST GET CLEAR... IF YOU CAN'T SEE THE RED, BOMB THE CENTRE OF THE CIRCLE OF GREENS!



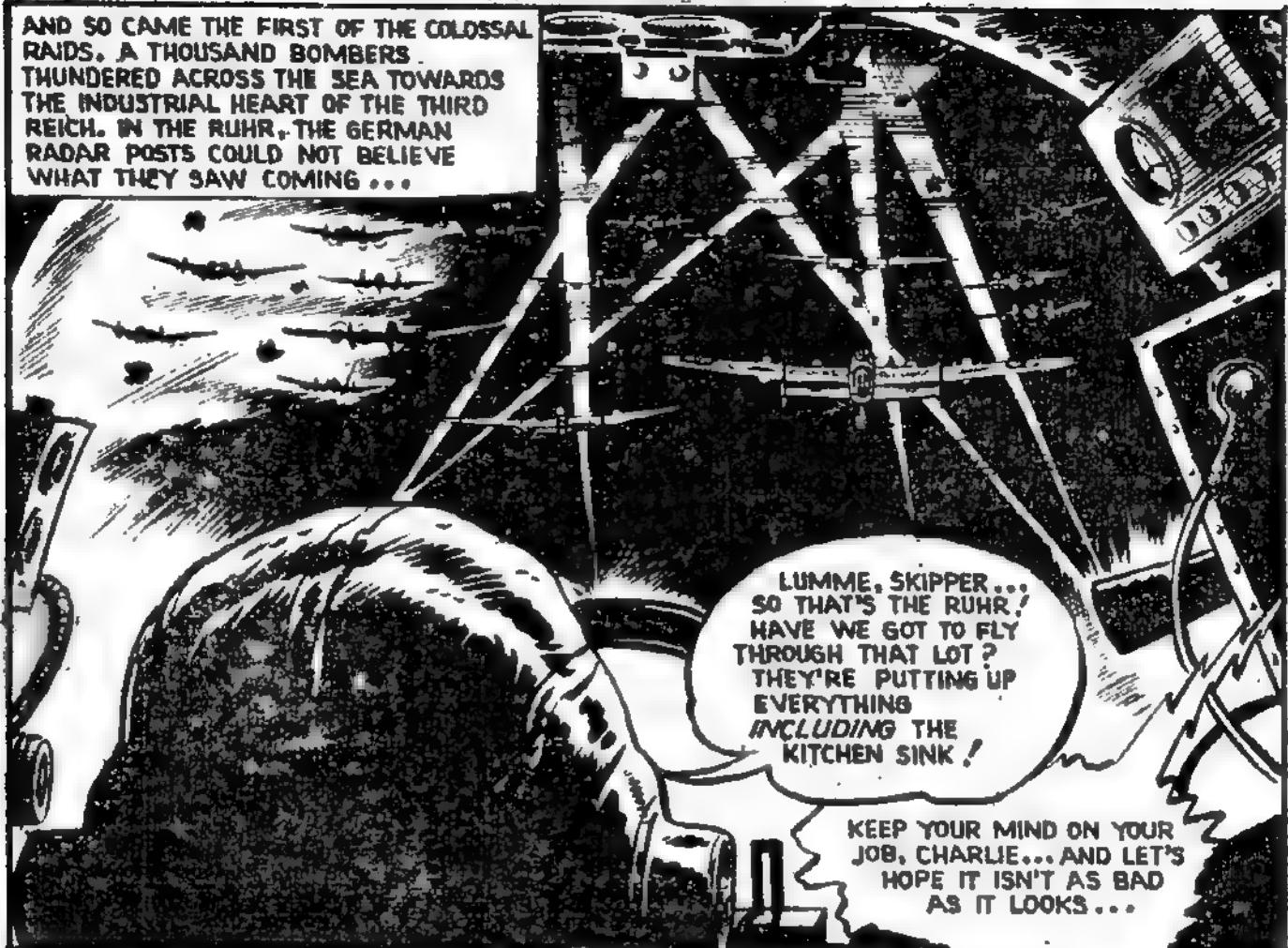
"... IF THE TARGET IS OBSCURED BY CLOUD, THE PATHFINDERS WILL DROP PARACHUTE FLARES ABOVE THE CLOUD, DIRECTLY OVER THE TARGET. THEN ALL YOU WILL HAVE TO DO IS SIMPLY BOMB THE FLARES... AND THE TARGET AREA WILL COP IT JUST THE SAME!"

FLARE DEAD AHEAD!  
THIS IS A PIECE OF CAKE, SKIP... WE JUST DROP OUR LOAD AND WE SHOVE OFF!



## Raven Over Berlin

AND SO CAME THE FIRST OF THE COLOSSAL RAIDS. A THOUSAND BOMBERS THUNDERED ACROSS THE SEA TOWARDS THE INDUSTRIAL HEART OF THE THIRD REICH. IN THE RUHR, THE GERMAN RADAR POSTS COULD NOT BELIEVE WHAT THEY SAW COMING ...



LUMME, SKIPPER...  
SO THAT'S THE RUHR!  
HAVE WE GOT TO FLY  
THROUGH THAT LOT?  
THEY'RE PUTTING UP  
EVERYTHING  
INCLUDING THE  
KITCHEN SINK!

KEEP YOUR MIND ON YOUR  
JOB, CHARLIE... AND LET'S  
HOPE IT ISN'T AS BAD  
AS IT LOOKS...

COLOGNE WAS POUNDED TO RUBBLE ... IT WAS DAWN OVER ENGLAND WHEN THE GREAT BOMBER FORCE CAME BACK TO THE WAITING AIRFIELDS. AND AS MACHINE AFTER MACHINE ROARED IN PAST THE CONTROL TOWERS, THERE WERE WATCHERS WHO COUNTED GRIMLY.



A FOR ABLE TO CONTROL ...  
WE'LL TRY TO MAKE IT WITHOUT  
MUCKING UP YOUR RUNWAY  
... AND BY THE WAY,  
THREE CASUALTIES  
ON BOARD ...

DO YOUR  
BEST ... WE'VE GOT  
X FOR XYLOPHONE  
CIRCLING AT ANGELS FIVE  
WITH SHOT-UP UNDERCART.  
AND O FOR ORANGE AT ANGELS  
TWELVE WITH AN UNEXPLODED  
COOKIE JAR ABOARD, WAITING  
FOR HIS FUEL TO RUN OUT...

DURING THE REST OF THAT SUMMER, RAID AFTER RAID WENT OUT... AND THE DEFENCES OF THE RUHR WERE DOUBLED, AND THEN TREBLED, TO STAVE OFF THE APPALING BLOWS TO GERMAN INDUSTRY. BUT BOMBER COMMAND'S LOSSES WERE EVEN HEAVIER THAN FEARED...

WELL, WHAT WAS IT LIKE THIS TIME, WILSON?

IT'S GRADUALLY GETTING WORSE, SIR... THE FLAK WAS LIKE A WALL, AND THE NIGHT FIGHTERS LIKE FLIES! I'M WORN OUT FLINGING THE LANC AROUND... WHAT THAT BUS NEEDS IS A LITTLE GADGET TO KEEP HER WEAVING SO THAT THE PILOT CAN TAKE IT EASY.



THE TIRED PILOT'S BANTER ABOUT "FLINGING THE LANC AROUND" SET WEBLEY THINKING. WHEN HE GOT BACK TO H.Q. HE CALLED A SPECIAL MEETING OF HIS TEAM...

I WANT AN ANALYSIS OF THE OPERATIONAL REPORTS OF ALL THE CREWS WHO MANAGED TO FINISH THEIR TOURS IN THE LAST FIVE MONTHS... AND I WANT THE RESULTS IN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS!

MAYBE... BUT I'M ON TO SOMETHING, AND IT COULD BE IMPORTANT!

THAT'S SOME ASSIGNMENT!



## Raven Over Berlin

BY THE FOLLOWING EVENING, ALL THE DATA WEBLEY WANTED WAS READY. HE FOUND THAT SIXTY PER CENT OF CREWS WHO HAD SURVIVED WENT INTO THEIR BOMBING RUN-UP STRAIGHT AND LEVEL.

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY FLYING STRAIGHT AND LEVEL SHOULD BE SAFER... BUT THE FIGURES SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES!

YOU'LL NEVER MAKE THE CREWS BELIEVE IT, SIR!



THAT SAME NIGHT, WEBLEY WENT INTO CONFERENCE WITH AIR VICE-MARSHAL USHER AND HIS STAFF.

SO THERE IT IS, SIR, STRAIGHT AND LEVEL FLYING WILL CUT OUR LOSSES!

YOU MAY HAVE SOMETHING, WEBLEY... BUT DARE WE TAKE THE RISK OF EXPERIMENTING?

FRANKLY, SIR, I'M AGAINST WEBLEY'S IDEA. I DON'T THINK HE QUITE APPRECIATES WHAT CONDITIONS ARE LIKE IN HAPPY VALLEY THESE DAYS!

I'VE JUST COME OFF OPERATIONAL FLYING... AND I THINK THE IDEA'S RIDICULOUS!



THE TAINTS OF THE OTHER OFFICERS AT THE CONFERENCE STUNG WEBLEY DEEPLY... FOR THE URGE TO RETURN TO OPERATIONAL FLYING HAD BEEN WITH HIM STRONGLY DURING THE PAST FEW MONTHS. WHEN THE OTHERS HAD GONE, WEBLEY TACKLED USHER... ALONE...

... WHAT THE OTHERS WERE HINTING MAY WELL BE RIGHT! IT'S POSSIBLE THAT I AM GETTING OUT OF TOUCH... SO I'M GOING TO ASK, SIR, THAT YOU LET ME GO BACK ON OPERATIONS.

IF THAT IS HOW YOU FEEL, WEBLEY, I WON'T STAND IN YOUR WAY. WE'RE DESPERATELY SHORT OF SEASONED OFFICERS ABLE TO COMMAND AND INSPIRE THEIR MEN.

SO WEBLEY WAS POSTED AS REPLACEMENT COMMANDING OFFICER TO 720 BOMBER SQUADRON... A SQUADRON THAT HAD BEEN BADLY HIT IN THE RECENT RUHR RAIDS...

HERE COMES THE NEW C.O. LET'S HOPE HE LASTS LONGER THAN THE OLD MAN.

THEY TELL ME HE'S SOME PENGUIN FROM COMMAND H.Q. ... BIG FEET AND CAN'T FLY!

GAZING ACROSS THE AIRFIELD, WEBLEY SAW THE OUTLINES OF THE GREAT BOMBERS POISED LIKE EAGLES AGAINST THE EVENING SKY...

IT'LL TAKE SOME TIME TO LEARN HOW TO HANDLE ONE OF THOSE... THAT'LL MARCH AT LEAST A WEEK BEFORE I'LL BE FIT TO MAKE AN OPERATIONAL TRIP.

## Raven Over Berlin

THE WORD THAT THE NEW C.O. WAS AN AIR MINISTRY MAN HAD GONE ROUND... AND ALL THE AIRCREW WAITED TO JUDGE HIS QUALITIES... AMONG THEM A SEASONED SQUADRON-LEADER BY THE NAME OF CARVER, WHO HAD ONCE BEEN A HURRICANE FIGHTER PILOT.



ATTENTION, GENTLEMEN!  
THIS IS YOUR NEW COMMANDING OFFICER, WING-COMMANDER WEBLEY!

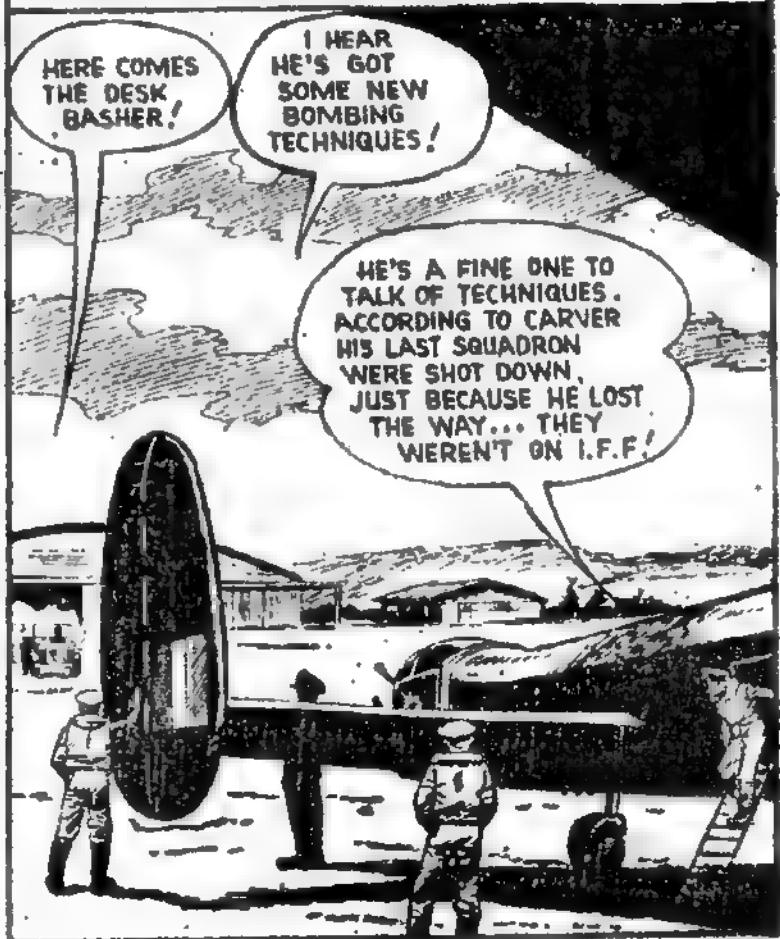


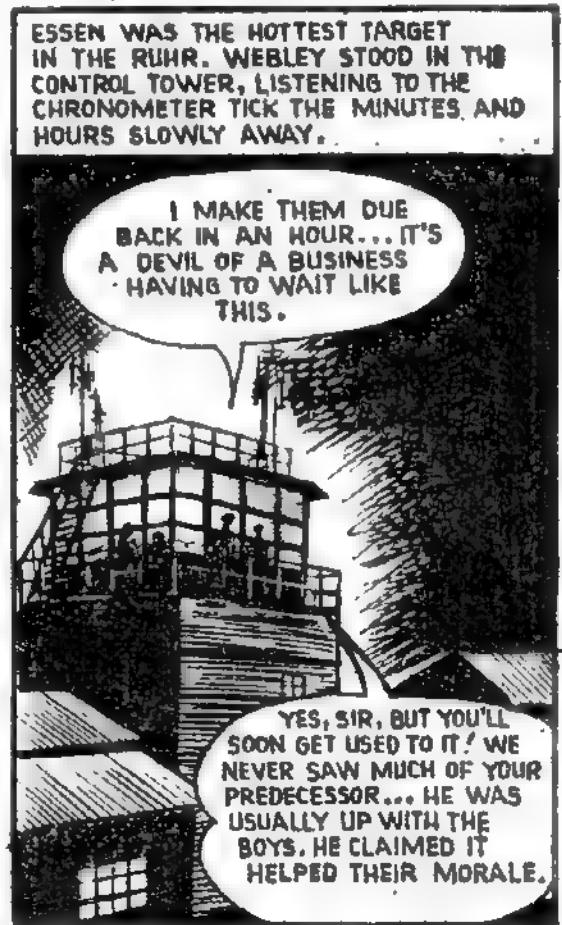
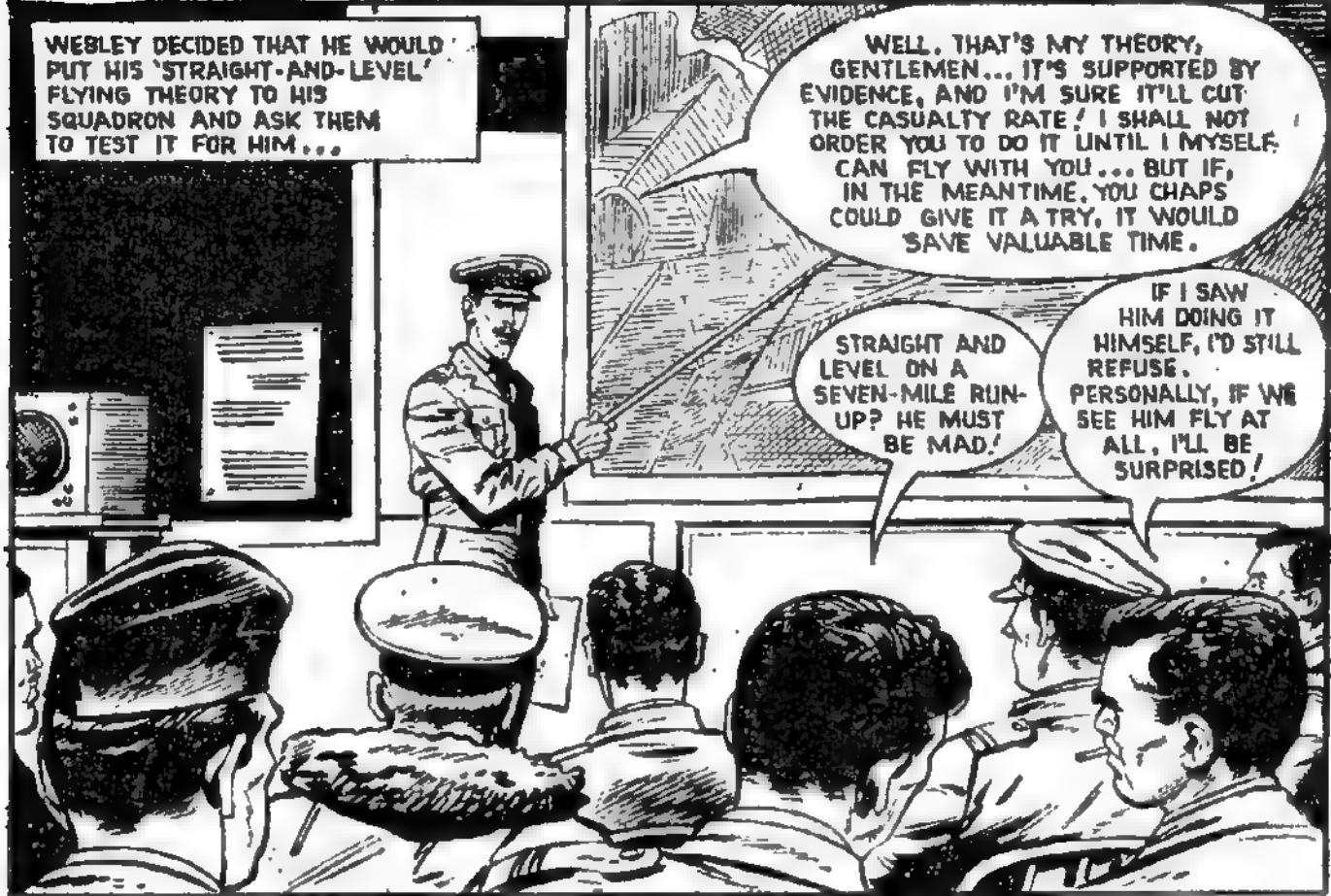
SQUADRON-LEADER CARVER HAD NO WISH TO MEET WEBLEY, BUT AS HE CROSSED THE ROOM ON HIS WAY OUT... WEBLEY SAW HIM...



EVER SINCE THE FIASCO! I UNDERSTAND, SIR, THAT YOU HAVE BEEN CHAIRBORNE SINCE THAT TIME... WILL YOU BE FLYING WITH US?

WEBLEY DID NOT MISS CARVER'S VEILED TAUNT... BUT BAD VISIBILITY AND A TEMPORARY SHORTAGE OF AIRCRAFT DELAYED HIS SHORT TRAINING COURSE. A FORTNIGHT LATER HE STILL HAD NOT GONE ON OPERATIONS WITH HIS CREWS.





## Raven Over Berlin

A FEW MINUTES LATER THE SILENCE OF THE CONTROL TOWER WAS SUDDENLY BROKEN. A PILOT WAS TALKING ... AND HE HAD OBVIOUSLY FORGOTTEN TO TURN HIS RADIO TO 'RECEIVE', AND IT WAS STILL ON 'TRANSMIT'...



UNAWARE THAT HIS WORDS WERE BEING PICKED UP BY HIS OWN CONTROL TOWER AND PROBABLY THE GERMANS, CARVER RAMBLED CHEERFULLY ON.



THE LANCASTERS THUNDERED ON TOWARDS THE ENGLISH COAST, AND UNWITTINGLY, CARVER CONTINUED TO BROADCAST HIS OPINION OF HIS C.O.



## Raven Over Berlin

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WEBLEY LEFT THE BRIEFING ROOM, AND WAITED WITH PENT-UP ANGER IN HIS OWN OFFICE FOR CARVER TO APPEAR. HE WAS NOT LONG IN COMING.

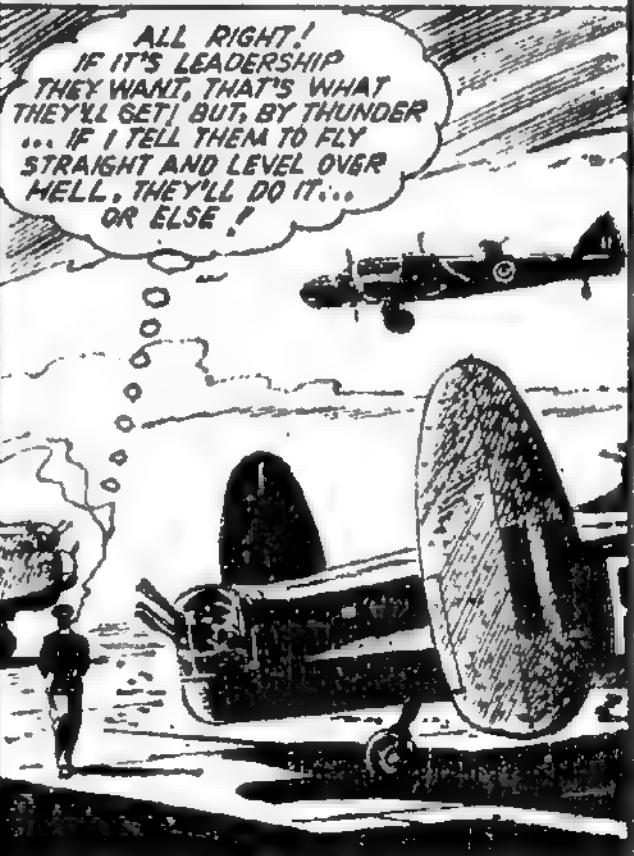


BUT CARVER, ALTHOUGH SHAKEN, WAS NOT COWED BY WEBLEY'S OUTBURST...

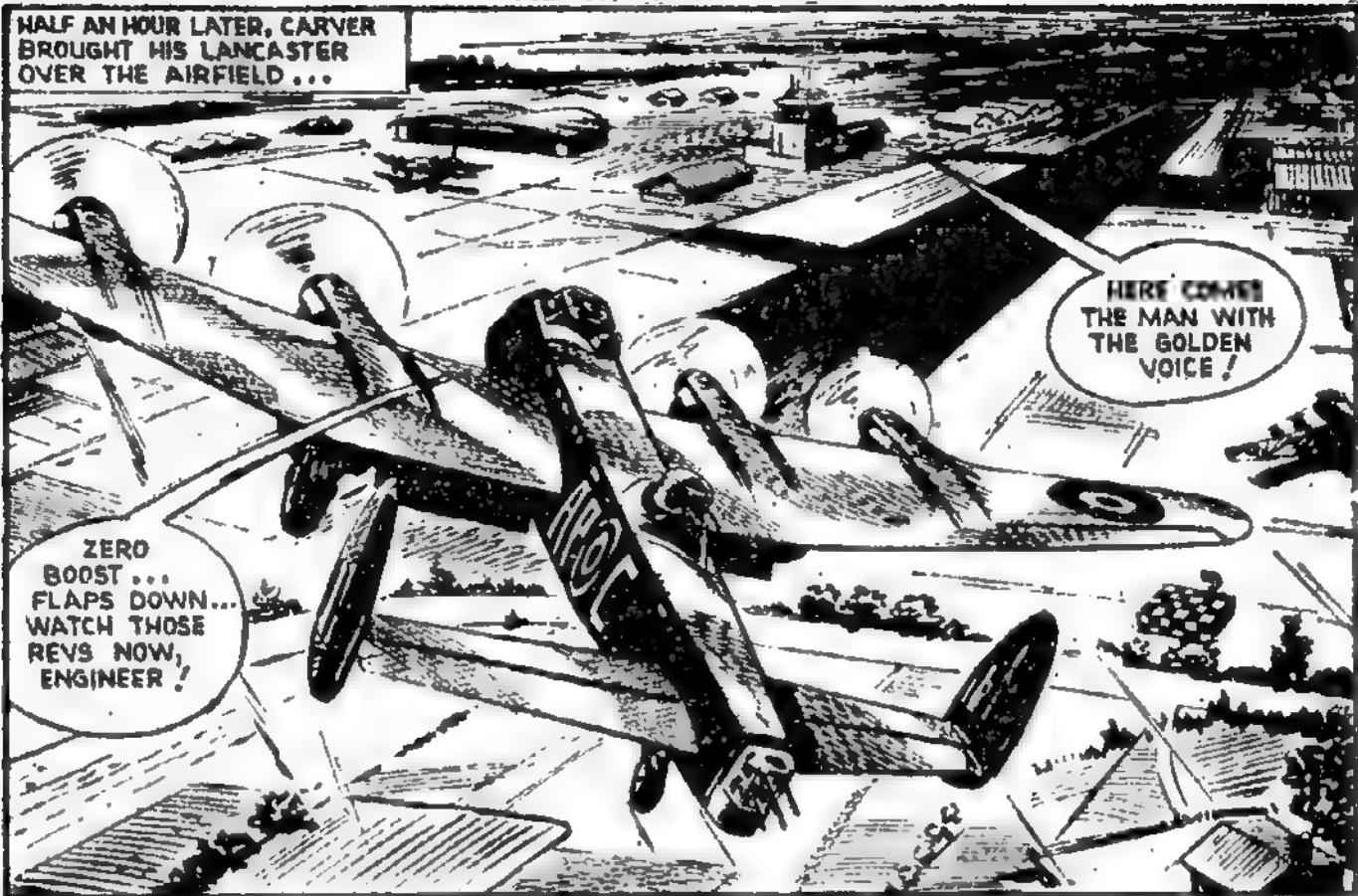
ALL RIGHT, SIR... I'M ON MY WAY! BUT WE EXPECT OUR C.O. TO FLY WITH US, INSTEAD OF ASKING US TO MAKE DANGEROUS EXPERIMENTS WHILE HE SITS COMFORTABLY IN FLYING CONTROL. BREAK ME IF YOU LIKE, BUT THAT'S MY OPINION OF YOU, SIR...



WEBLEY WALKED OUT ON TO THE AIRFIELD TO COOL OFF. WAS CARVER RIGHT? HAD HE TURNED YELLOW... WAS HE MAKING AN EXCUSE OF THE FACT THAT HE HAD NOT DONE ENOUGH FLYING IN LANCASTERS?



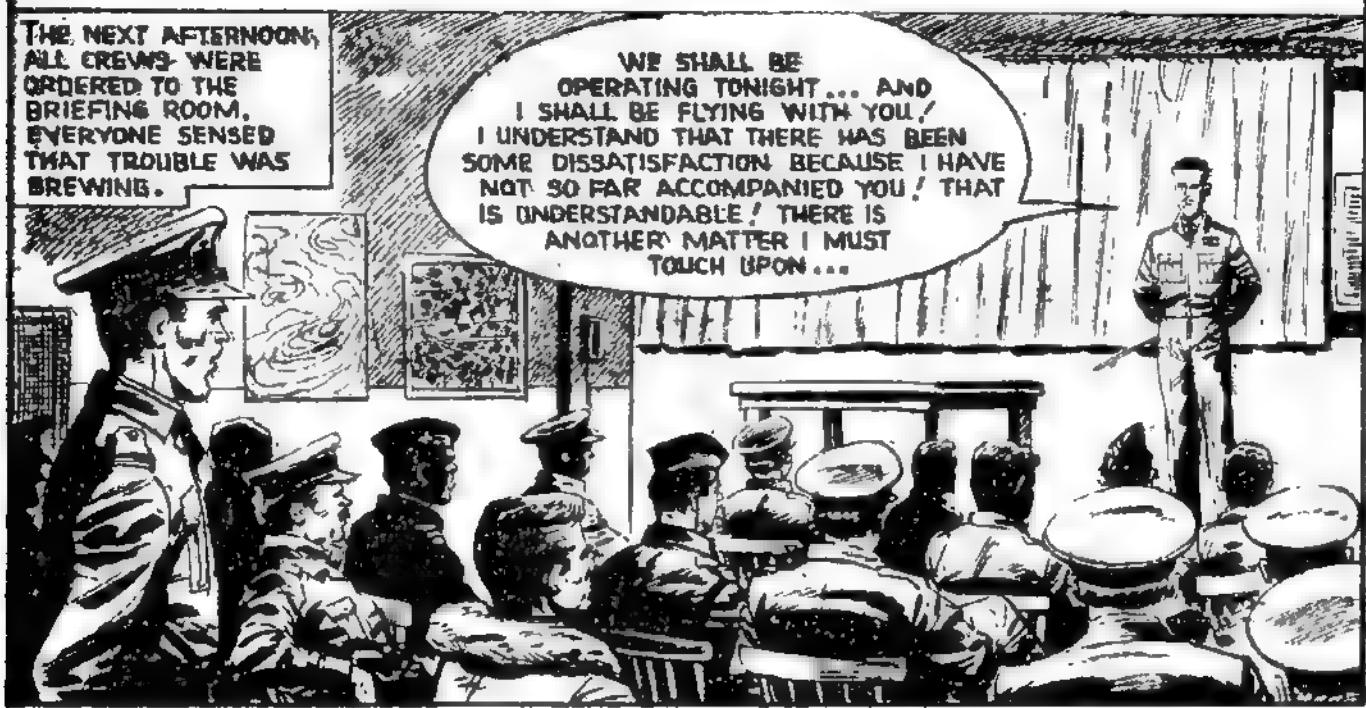
## Raven Over Berlin



Chapter 3.

# SUICIDE MISSION

THE NEXT AFTERNOON, ALL CREWS WERE ORDERED TO THE BRIEFING ROOM. EVERYONE SENSED THAT TROUBLE WAS BREWING.



WEBLEY WENT ON TO RECOUNT, IN CURT AND GRIM DETAIL, THE TRAGIC DISASTER OF THE HAMPDEN SQUADRON AND HIS ORIGINAL REASONS FOR GOING TO THE AIR MINISTRY...



HE THEN DISCLOSED THAT, HOWEVER WELL MARKED THE TARGET, BOMBS STILL TENDED TO FALL SHORT.

I HAVE A SCHEME IN MIND WHICH MAY PREVENT THIS. WE WILL BE THE FIRST SQUADRON TO TRY OUT A NEW AND REVOLUTIONARY SYSTEM...

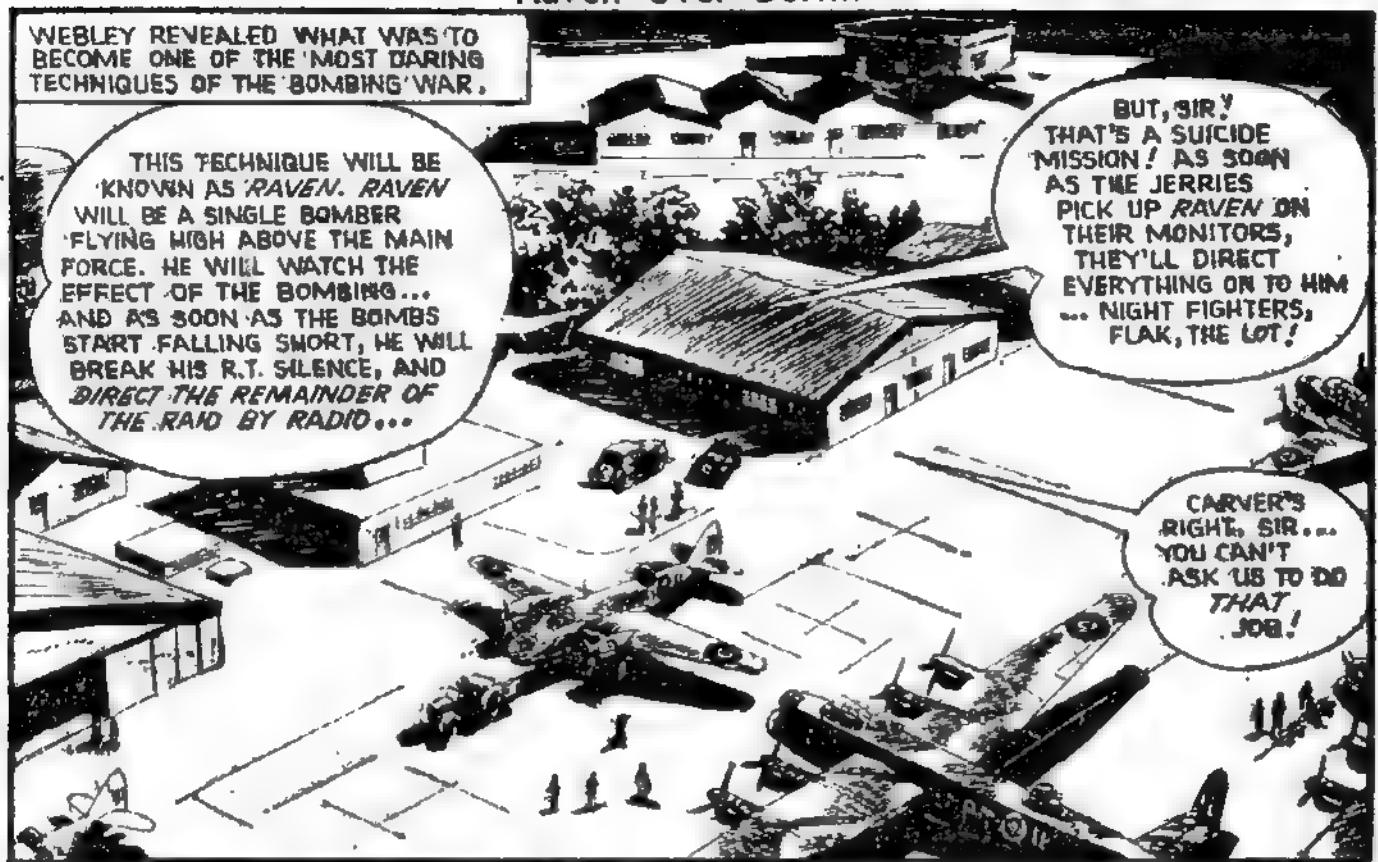


WEBLEY REVEALED WHAT WAS TO BECOME ONE OF THE 'MOST DARING TECHNIQUES OF THE BOMBING WAR.'

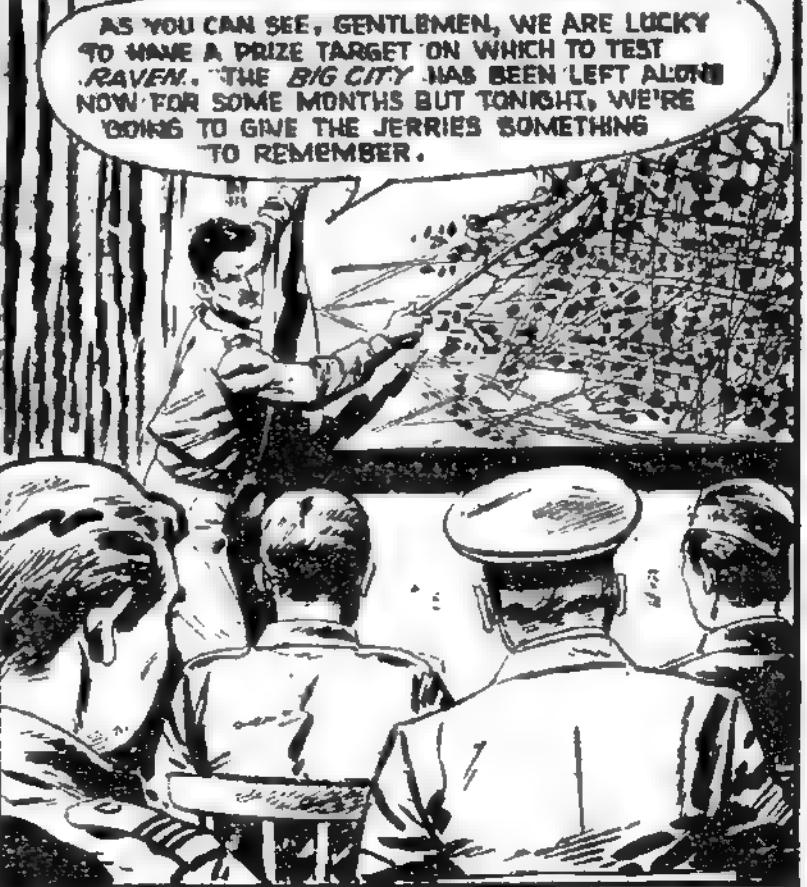
THIS TECHNIQUE WILL BE KNOWN AS 'RAVEN'. RAVEN WILL BE A SINGLE BOMBER FLYING HIGH ABOVE THE MAIN FORCE. HE WILL WATCH THE EFFECT OF THE BOMBING... AND AS SOON AS THE BOMBS START FALLING SHORT, HE WILL BREAK HIS R.T. SILENCE, AND DIRECT THE REMAINDER OF THE RAID BY RADIO...

BUT, SIR? THAT'S A SUICIDE MISSION! AS SOON AS THE JERRIES PICK UP RAVEN ON THEIR MONITORS, THEY'LL DIRECT EVERYTHING ON TO HIM... NIGHT FIGHTERS, FLAK, THE LOT!

CARVER'S RIGHT, SIR... YOU CAN'T ASK US TO DO THAT JOB!



AS WEBLEY PUSHED BACK THE CLOTH COVERING THE TARGET MAP, A BUZZ OF EXCITEMENT ROSE FROM THE ASSEMBLED CREWS. THE TARGET WAS BERLIN!



## Raven Over Berlin

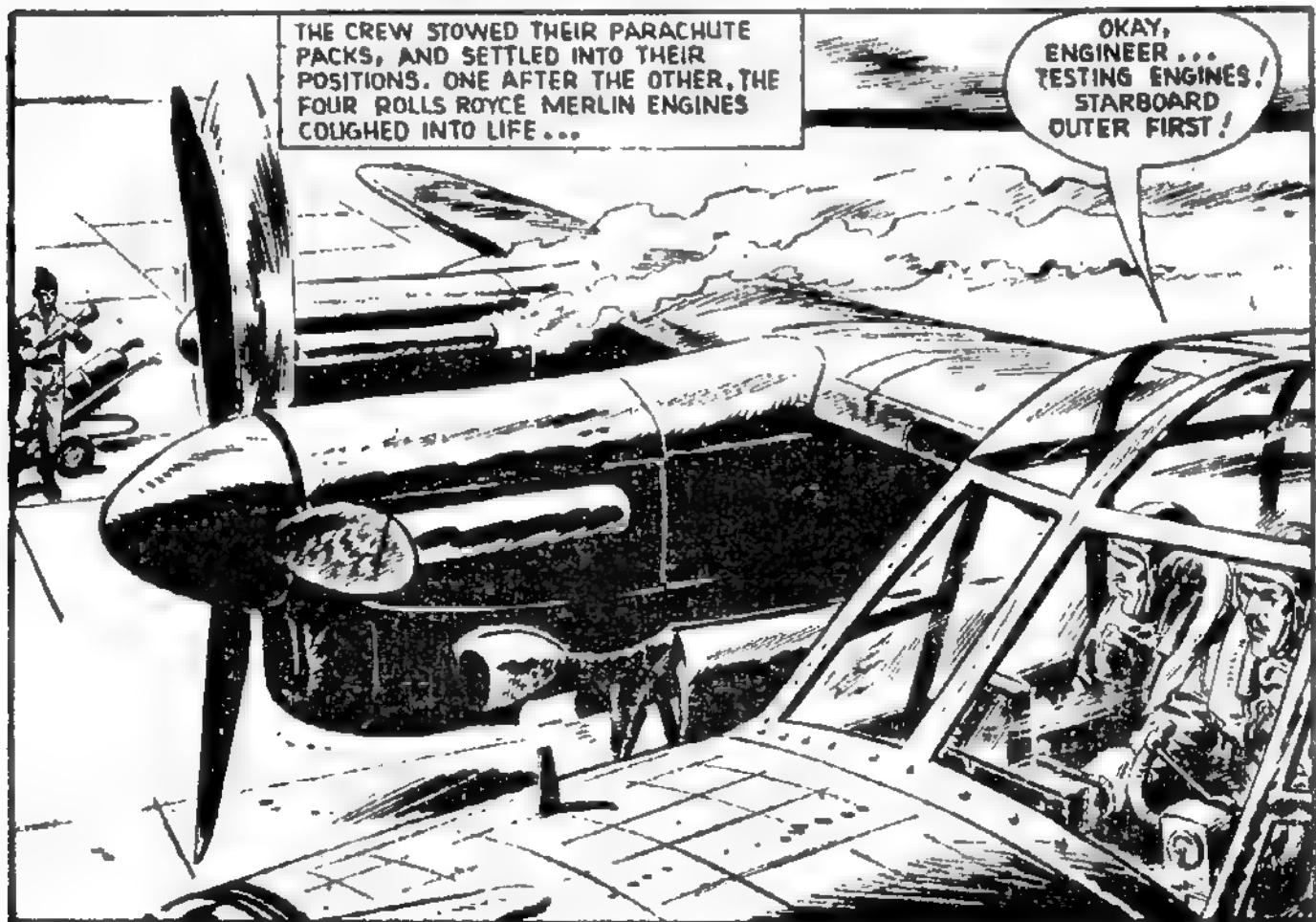


ALTHOUGH HE WAS OUTWARDLY CONFIDENT, WEBLEY REALISED THE DANGER INTO WHICH HE WAS LEADING HIS CREW... AND HE KNEW THAT EVERY OUNCE OF SKILL AT HIS COMMAND WOULD BE NEEDED TO BRING THEM SAFELY HOME.



THE CREW STOWED THEIR PARACHUTE PACKS, AND SETTLED INTO THEIR POSITIONS. ONE AFTER THE OTHER, THE FOUR ROLLS ROYCE MERLIN ENGINES COUGHED INTO LIFE...

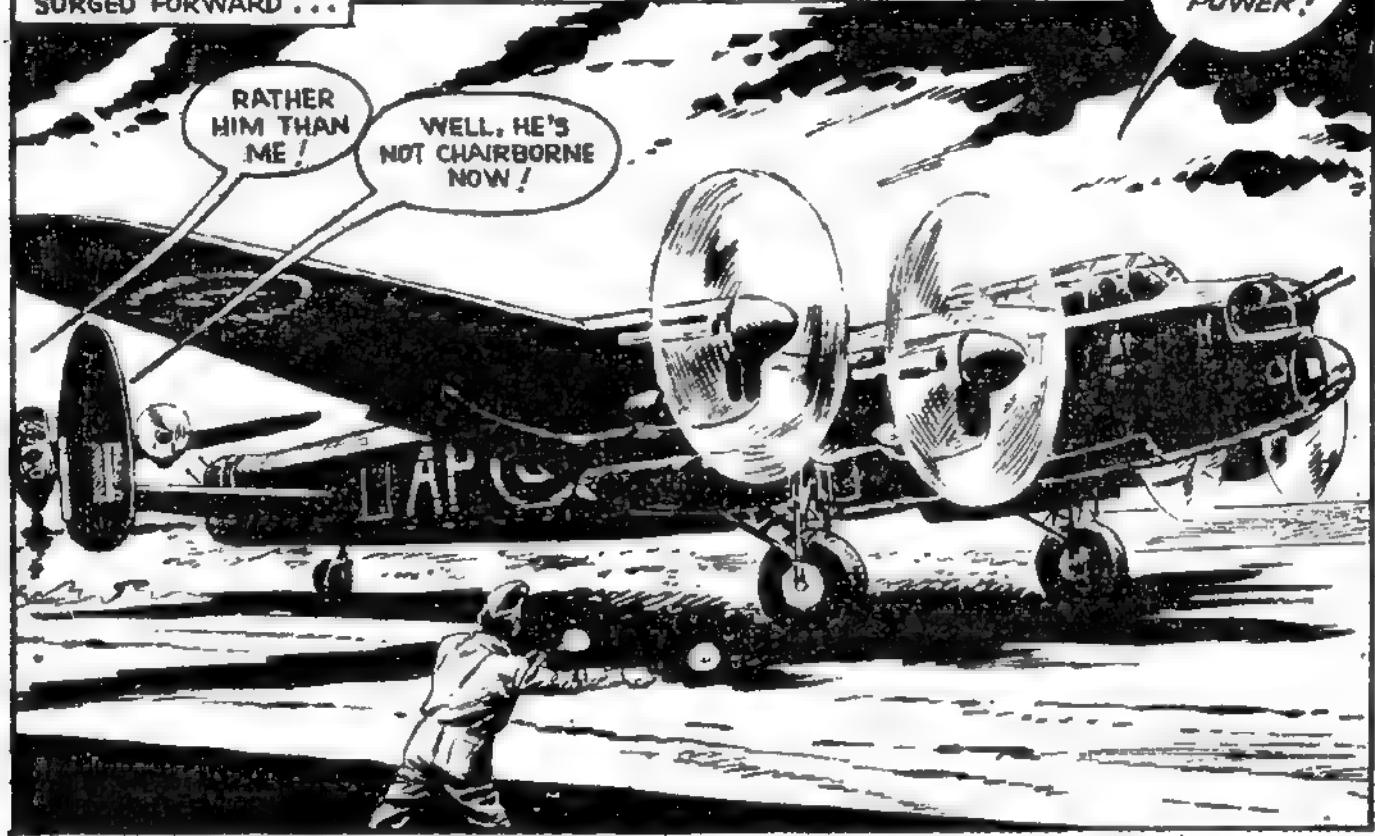
OKAY, ENGINEER... TESTING ENGINES! STARBOARD OUTER FIRST!



## Raven Over Berlin

WEBLEY LED THE SQUADRON IN LINE AS THEY TAXIED ROUND THE PERIMETER TRACK TO THE RUNWAY FOR TAKE-OFF. THE ENGINEER OPENED THE THROTTLES WHILE WEBLEY HELD THE BRAKES... THE LANCASTER VIBRATED AND STRUGGLED LIKE A CAGED BEAST AS THE ENGINE NOTE ROSE TO A DEAFENING CLIMAX. THEN WEBLEY RELEASED THE BRAKES, AND THEY SURGED FORWARD . . .

OKAY,  
ENGINEER...  
FULL  
POWER!



FOR ALMOST AN HOUR THEY CLIMBED OVER BASE TO OPERATIONAL HEIGHT. WITHOUT A BOMB LOAD, WEBLEY WAS ABLE TO COAX THE LANCASTER TO 30,000 FEET, 10,000 FEET ABOVE THE MAIN FORCE.

PILOT TO CREW...  
WATCH YOUR OXYGEN  
SUPPLY PIPES! DON'T  
LEAN ON THEM! WITHOUT  
OXYGEN, YOU WON'T LAST  
THIRTY SECONDS UP  
HERE . . .

I SAY,  
SKIPPER... BOMB-  
AIMER HERE! IT'S  
THIRTY DEGREES  
BELOW FREEZING!  
I WISH THE HOT  
AIR YOU'VE GOT IN  
THERE WOULD  
DRIFT DOWN HERE!



## Raven Over Berlin

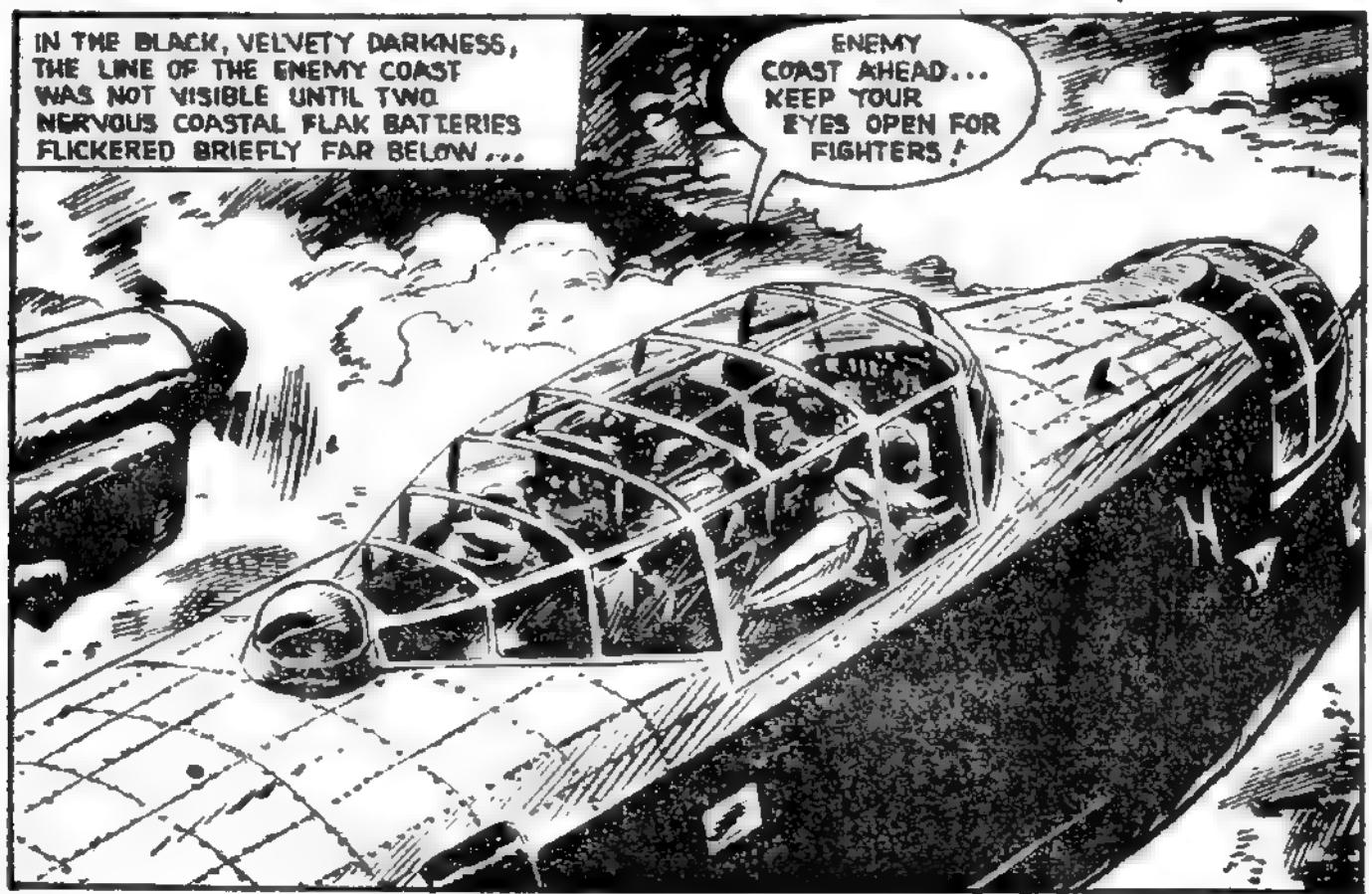
4

AIRCRAFT FROM ALL SQUADRONS IN BOMBER COMMAND GATHERED THAT NIGHT... THEIR DESTINATION, BERLIN. FAR ABOVE THE MIGHTY ARMADA, WEBLEY'S SOLITARY LANCASTER MADE ITS OWN COURSE...

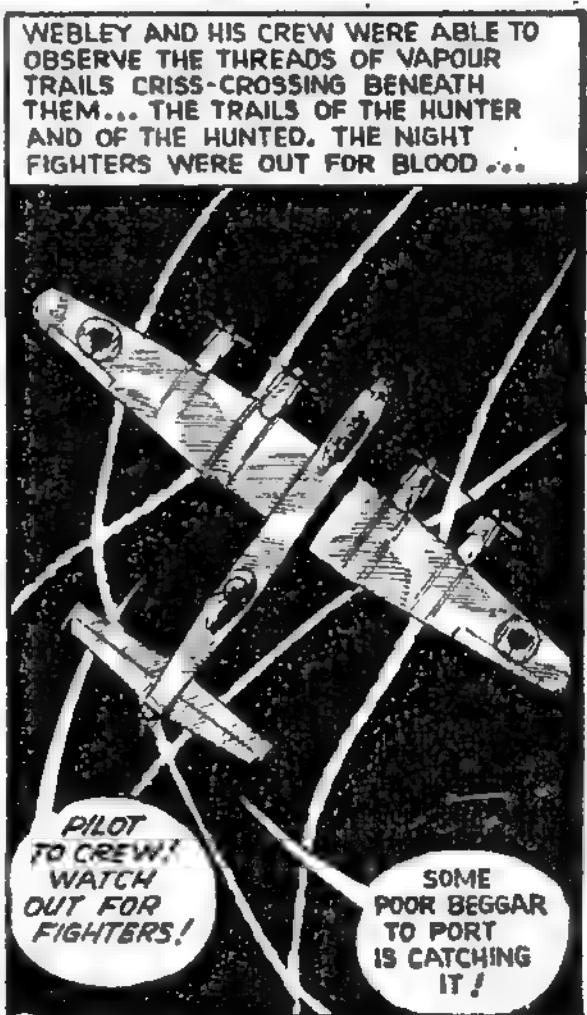


IN THE BLACK, VELVETY DARKNESS, THE LINE OF THE ENEMY COAST WAS NOT VISIBLE UNTIL TWO NERVOUS COASTAL FLAK BATTERIES FLICKERED BRIEFLY FAR BELOW...

ENEMY COAST AHEAD... KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN FOR FIGHTERS!



## Raven Over Berlin



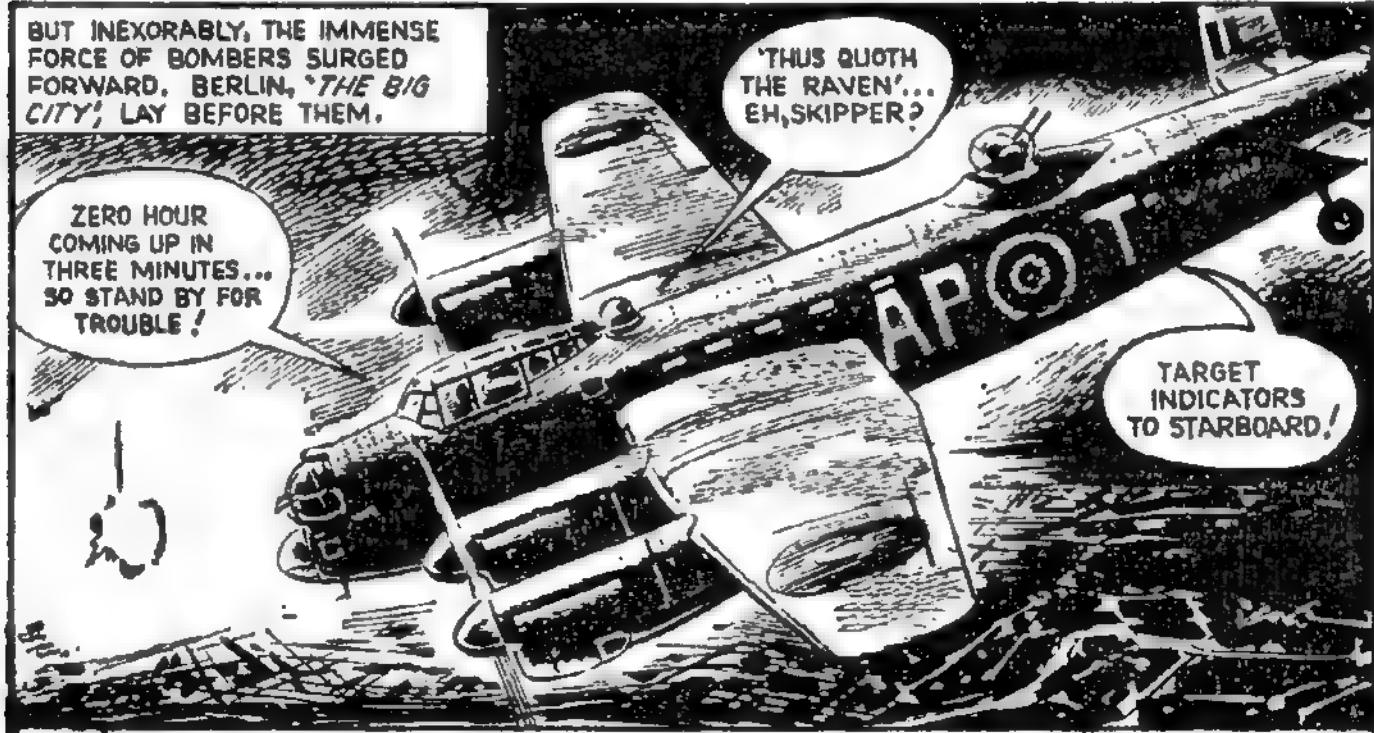
## Raven Over Berlin

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DOWN AMONG THE MAIN FORCE, THE BOMBER PILOTS SWEATED AND GASPED WITH THE EXERTION AS THEY FLUNG THEIR LADEN AIRCRAFT ABOUT THE SKY IN THEIR EFFORTS TO ESCAPE THE RELENTLESS ATTACK OF THE NIGHT FIGHTERS.



BUT INEXORABLY, THE IMMENSE FORCE OF BOMBERS SURGED FORWARD. BERLIN, 'THE BIG CITY', LAY BEFORE THEM.



## Raven Over Berlin

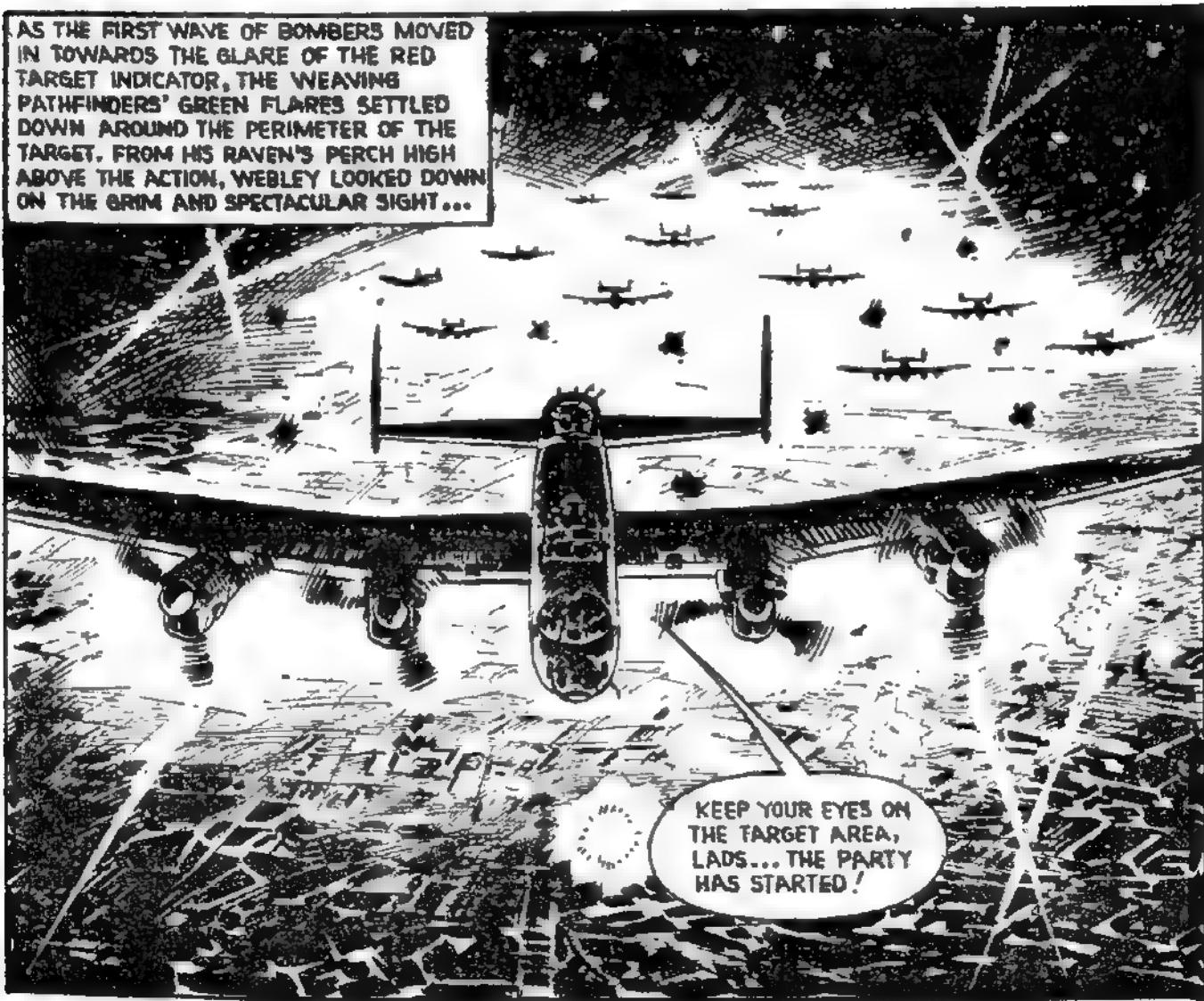
THE FIRST OF THE RED TARGET INDICATORS CASCaded INTO THE HEART OF THE WAITING CITY. FAR BELOW, THE PATHFINDERS HAD BEGINN THEIR TASK...



OKAY, SIR...  
TURN ON  
O-THREE-FIVE!

TURNING ON! I WONDER  
IF THIS RAVEN JOKER WILL  
TRY HIS TRICKS ON US IF  
WE MAKE A DIVE RUN...

AS THE FIRST WAVE OF BOMBERS MOVED IN TOWARDS THE GLARE OF THE RED TARGET INDICATOR, THE WEAVING PATHFINDERS' GREEN FLARES SETTLED DOWN AROUND THE PERIMETER OF THE TARGET. FROM HIS RAVEN'S PERCH HIGH ABOVE THE ACTION, WEBLEY LOOKED DOWN ON THE GRIM AND SPECTACULAR SIGHT...



KEEP YOUR EYES ON  
THE TARGET AREA,  
LADS... THE PARTY  
HAS STARTED!

AS THEY RAN UP TOWARDS THE MARKERS,  
THE FIRST BOMBERS OF THE GREAT WAVE  
UNLOADED THEIR MIXED CARGOES WITH  
DEADLY PRECISION...

COOKIE  
AWAY.  
SIR!

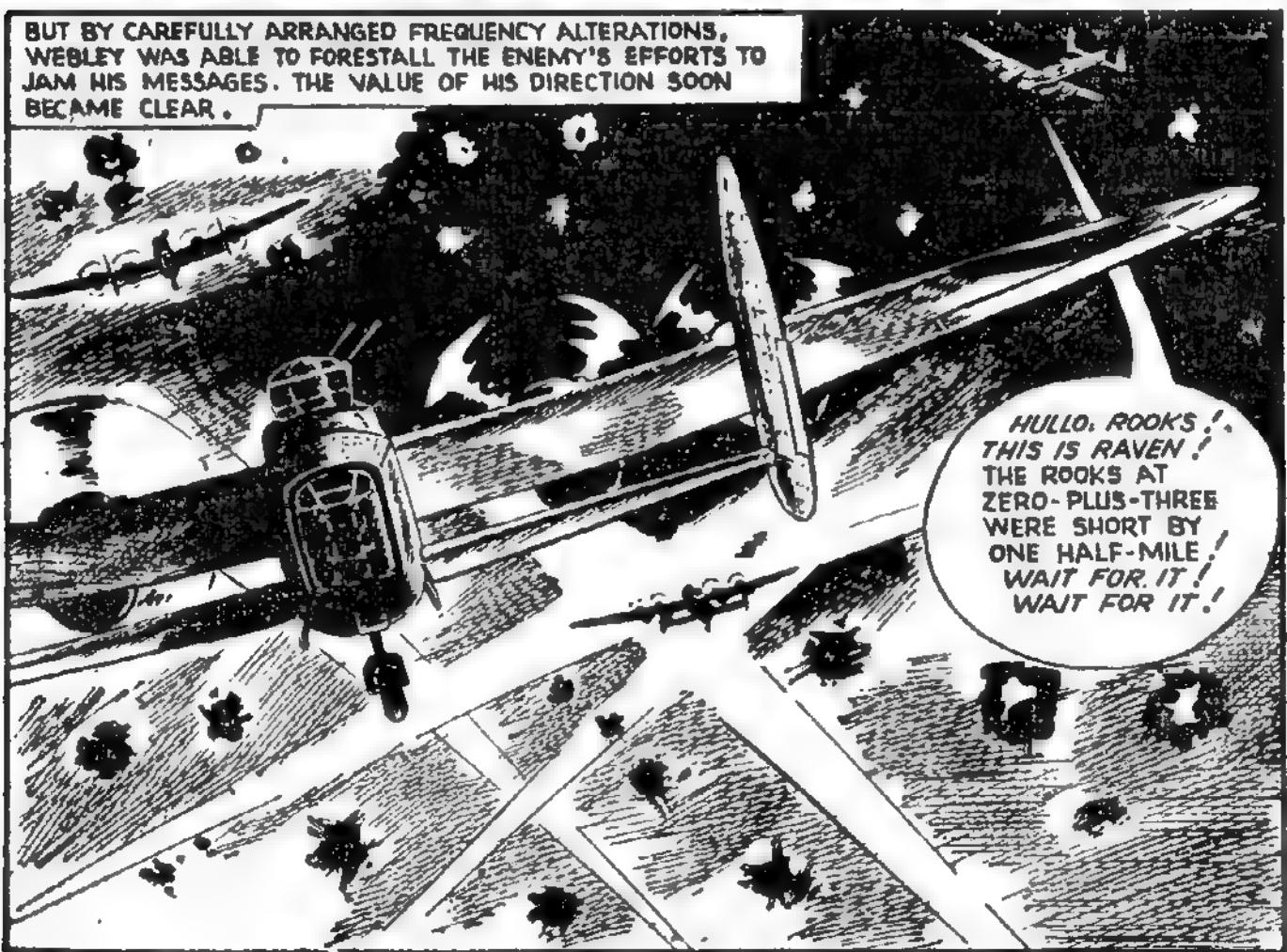
THEN  
LET'S GET  
OUT OF  
HERE!

BOOM

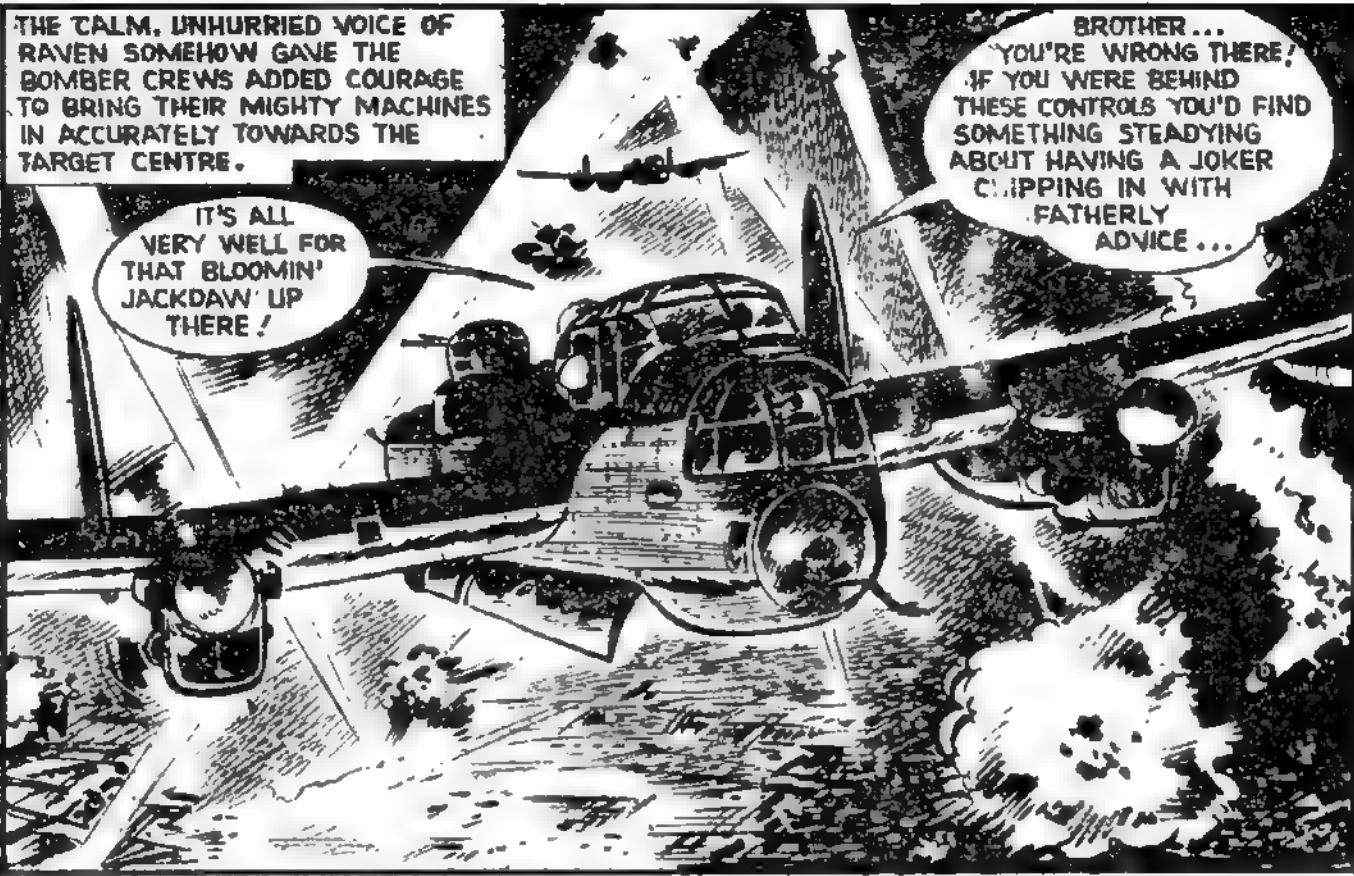
THE TARGET CENTRE WAS A VAST PATCH OF  
PHOSPHORESCENCE, TWO HUNDRED YARDS  
ACROSS. INTO IT, LIKE THE CRACK OF  
DOOM, FELL THE FIRST OF THE HIGH-  
VELOCITY BLOCK-BUSTERS...







## Raven Over Berlin



## Raven: Over Berlin

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THE FLAK BARRAGES STUDED THE SKY AROUND WEEBLEY'S LANCASTER AND THE AIRFRAME OF THE HUGE MACHINE SHUDDERED AT NEAR BURSTS ...

HULLO,  
ROOKS... RAVEN  
CALLING! I'M  
HAVING A SPOT OF  
BOTHER... WILL  
CALL YOU AGAIN  
WHEN IT'S BEEN  
SORTED OUT!

THE PORT  
OUTER IS  
OVERHEATING,  
SIR!

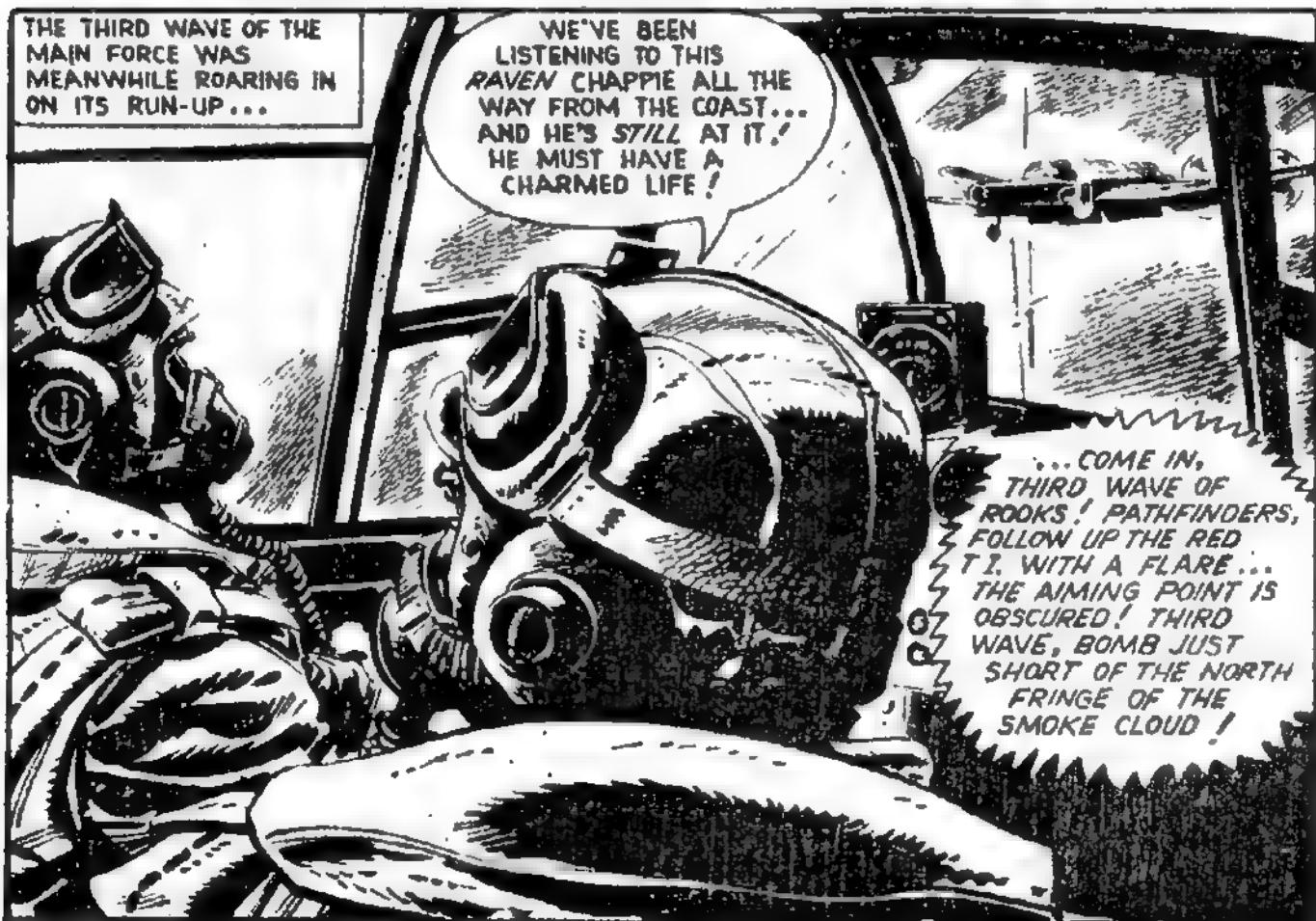
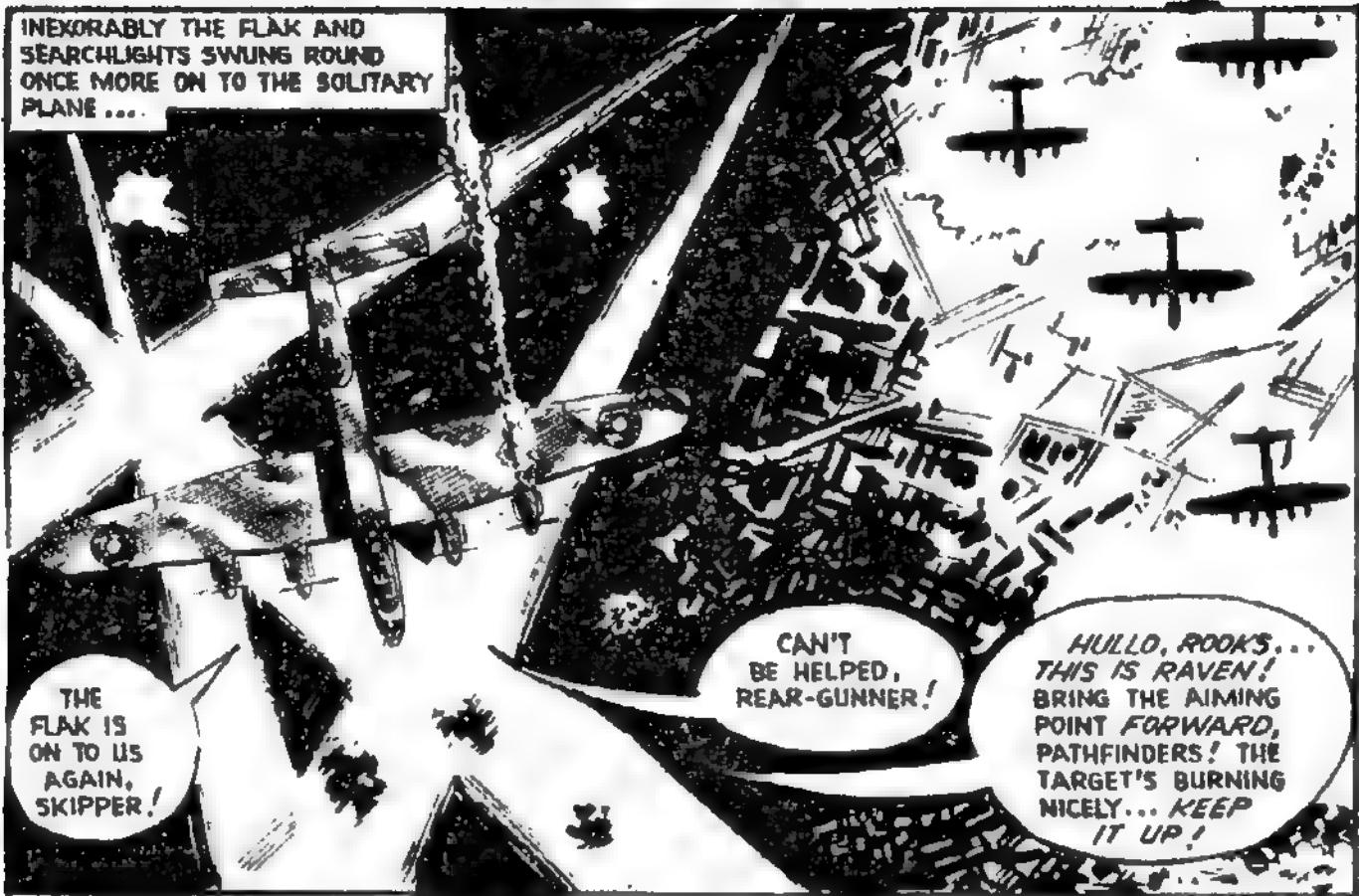
OVERHEATING,  
MY FOOT! IT'S  
ON FIRE!

SPEEDY ACTION WAS REQUIRED TO PREVENT THE FLAMES REACHING THE FUEL TANKS INSIDE THE WING-TIPS.

I'M AFRAID WE'VE HAD THAT ENGINE, SKIPPER! YOU'LL HAVE TO MANAGE ON THREE... I'M FEATHERING... AND PRESSING THE FIRE EXTINGUISHER BUTTON!

ROGER!  
LET'S HOPE IT WORKS!

## Raven Over Berlin



## Raven Over Berlin

57

CARVER, FLYING IN WITH THE THIRD WAVE,  
WAS LOOKING FOR 'RAVEN'...



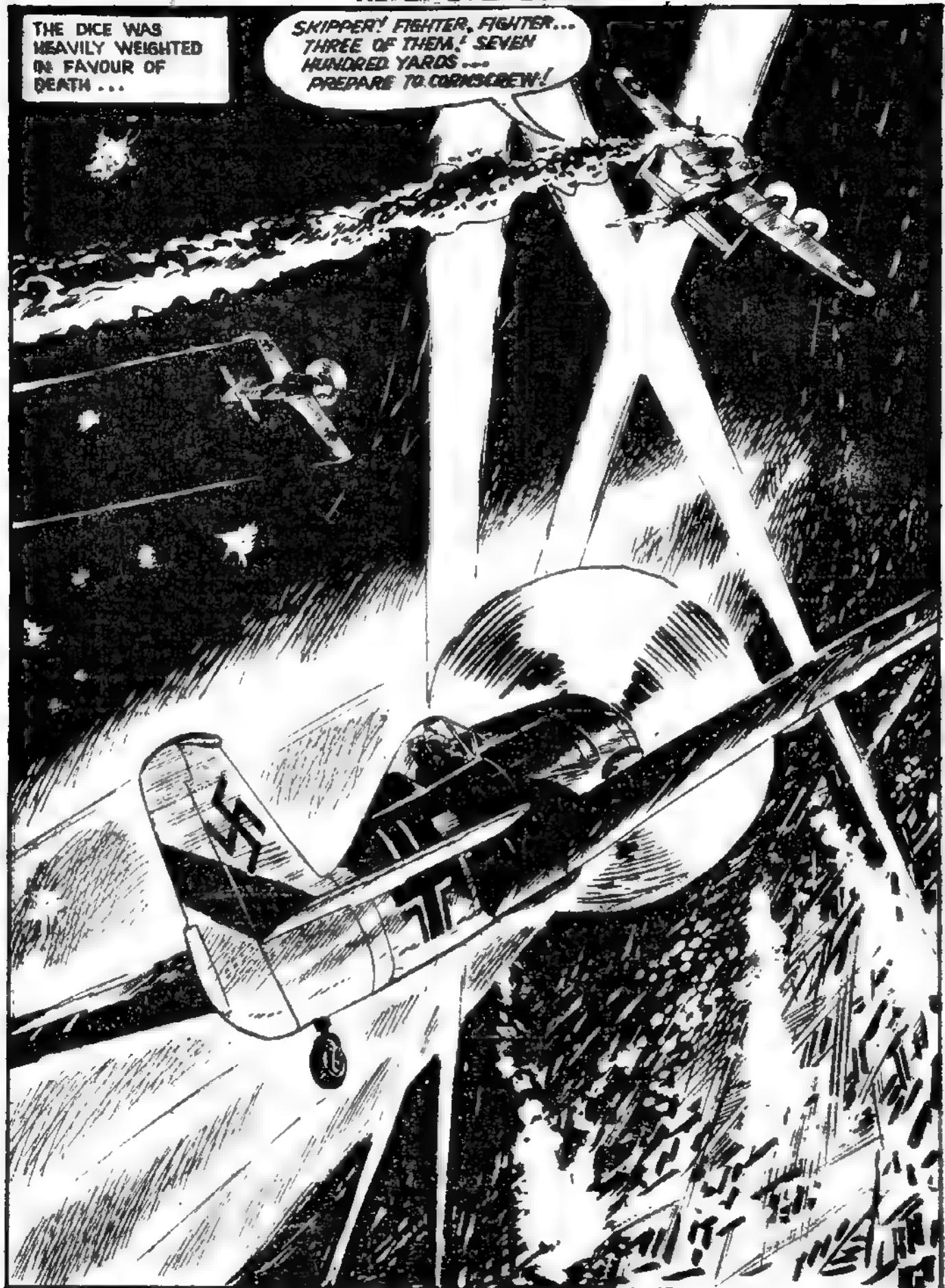
TO PERFORM EVASIVE ACTION WITH  
A FOUR-ENGINED BOMBER FLYING  
ON ONLY THREE ENGINES REQUIRES  
NERVE, SUPERB FLYING, AND  
MUSCLES OF STEEL. WEBLEY  
WAS ENDOWED WITH ALL THREE  
QUALITIES.



## Raven Over Berlin

THE DICE WAS  
HEAVILY WEIGHTED  
IN FAVOUR OF  
DEATH ...

SKIPPER! FIGHTER, FIGHTER...  
THREE OF THEM? SEVEN  
HUNDRED YARDS...  
PREPARE TO CORNCREW!



BUT WEBLEY REALISED THAT A SIMPLE CORNCOREW WOULD NOT EVADE THREE FIGHTERS. HE HELD THE MACHINE STEADY UNTIL THE FIRST BURST OF CANNON SHELL WHIPPED BY... AND THEN HE PULLED THE STICK RIGHT BACK...

THROTTLES  
THROUGH THE  
GATE, FLIGHT  
ENGINEER!

CHECK!  
THROUGH  
THE GATE  
IT IS!

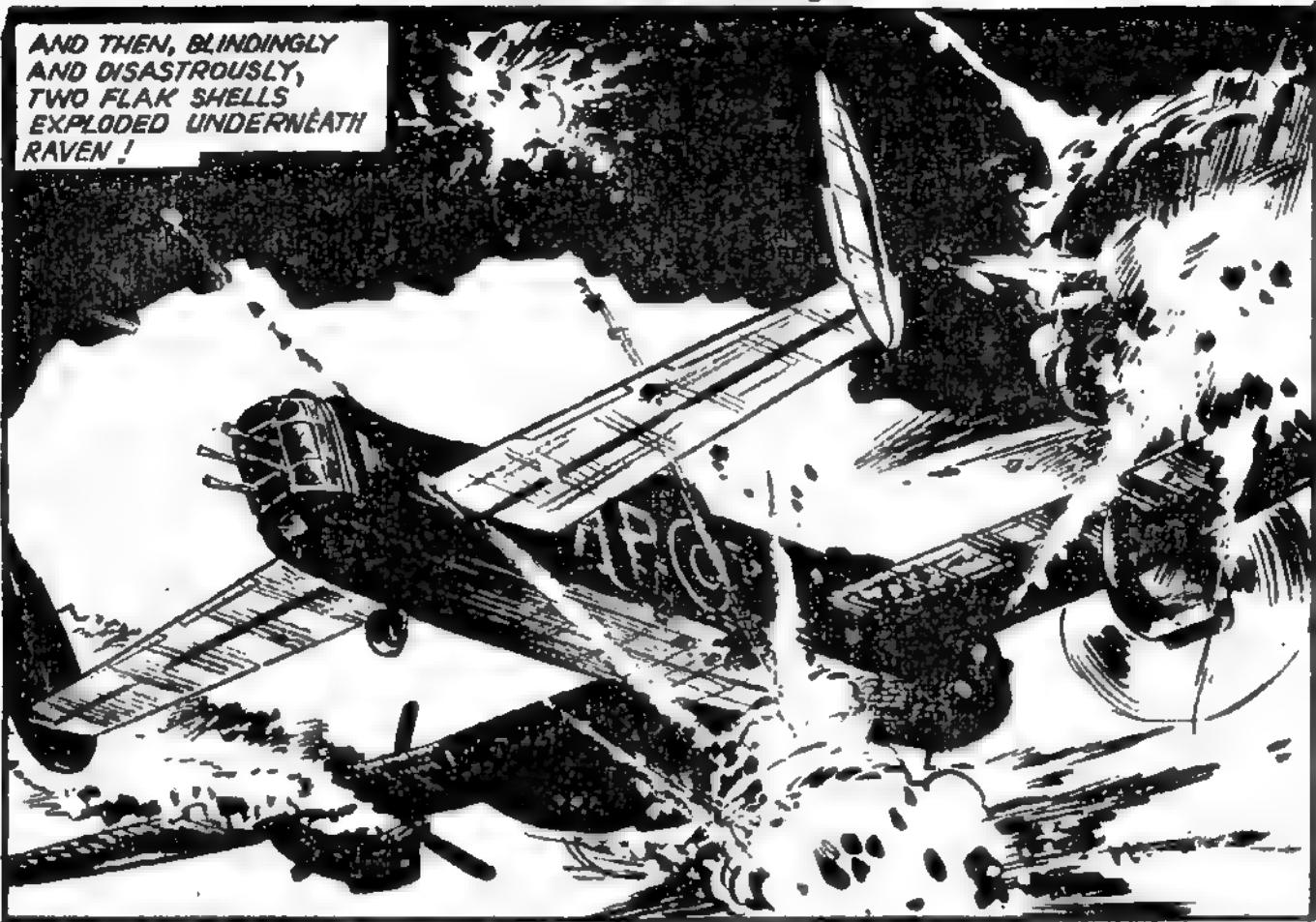
THE LANCASTER  
CHECKED LIKE A  
SWOOPING BIRD OF  
PREY, AND THEN  
THRUST UPWARDS  
WITH ITS MERLIN  
ENGINES SCRUMMING.  
THE FIGHTERS  
HURLED PAST  
UNDERNEATH,  
BREAKING AWAY  
RAGGEDLY TO TURN  
AGAIN INTO THE  
ATTACK...

NICE WORK, OLD GIRL... BUT  
THEY'LL BE BACK! GUNNERS,  
DON'T REPORT THE NEXT  
ATTACK UNTIL THE LAST  
POSSIBLE MINUTE.

HULLO, ROOKS...  
THIS IS RAVEN...



## Raven Over Berlin



IT WAS JUST AT THAT POINT THAT CARVER WAS PULLING AWAY FROM THE TARGET AREA WITH EMPTY BOMB BAYS.

TRUST THAT SILLY BLIGHTER WEBLEY TO CASH IN HIS CHIPS BEFORE THE SHOW IS OVER! WE CAN'T DO WITHOUT RAVEN... NOT NOW! THERE'S ONLY ONE THING FOR IT... SOMEBODY'S GOT TO TAKE HIS PLACE. WELL, FLIGHT ENGINEER, WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?

CHECK! FULL REV'S AND BOOST COMING UP, SIR! LET'S GET CLIMBING...

MEANWHILE, WEBLEY WAS NURSING THE BATTERED LANCASTER HOMEWARD, THE CHAOS OF BURNING BERLIN BEHIND HIM. SUDDENLY, THERE WAS A VOICE IN HIS EARPHONES... AND IN THE EARPHONES OF EVERY PILOT OF THE VAST FLEET OF BOMBERS.

HULLO, WEBLEY, WHEREVER YOU ARE... THIS IS CARVER! REPEAT, CARVER! YOU WERE AN INSPIRATION TO ALL THE BOYS, SO I'M PAYING YOU THE BIGGEST COMPLIMENT I CAN... I'M TAKING YOUR PLACE! I HOPE THIS CLEARS THE AIR BETWEEN US... SO GOODBYE! HULLO, ALL ROOKS... THIS IS RAVEN...

GREAT SCOTT, FLIGHT... IT'S CARVER... AND HE'S STANDING IN FOR US!

AND SO, HIGH ABOVE BERLIN, ANOTHER 'RAVEN' FLEW. FOR FIFTEEN LONG, DESTRUCTIVE MINUTES HE BORE THE CHARMED LIFE OF HIS PREDECESSOR... AND THEN THE HOUNDS WERE HOT ON THE SCENT...

PATHFINDERS! THESE RED TARGET INDICATORS ARE JUST DROPPING INTO THE SMOKE! WE MUST HAVE BETTER MARKING... IF NECESSARY... RELEASE FLARES HIGHER UP...



## Raven Over Berlin

IN AN INSTANT IT WAS OVER. THE GUNNERS MAY HAVE BEEN BLINDED BY THE GLARE OF THE SEARCHLIGHTS AND CARVER'S MIND WAS ON HIS TRANSMISSION — BUT WHY THE GERMAN DID NOT BREAK AWAY WILL NEVER BE KNOWN. THE FIGHTER HURTLED STRAIGHT INTO THE BOMBER!



AS THE FAINT VOICE OF 'RAVEN' SUDDENLY BROKE OFF, WEBLEY AND HIS ENGINEER LOOKED BRIEFLY AT EACH OTHER, BUT SAID NOTHING. TWO HOURS LATER, HIS FACE GREY WITH FATIGUE, WEBLEY COAXED THE SINKING BOMBER DESPERATELY IN A LAST BID FOR HEIGHT ...

PILOT TO CREW... WE MAY HAVE TO DITCH! SO MAKE READY! HOW'S THE WIRELESS DR?

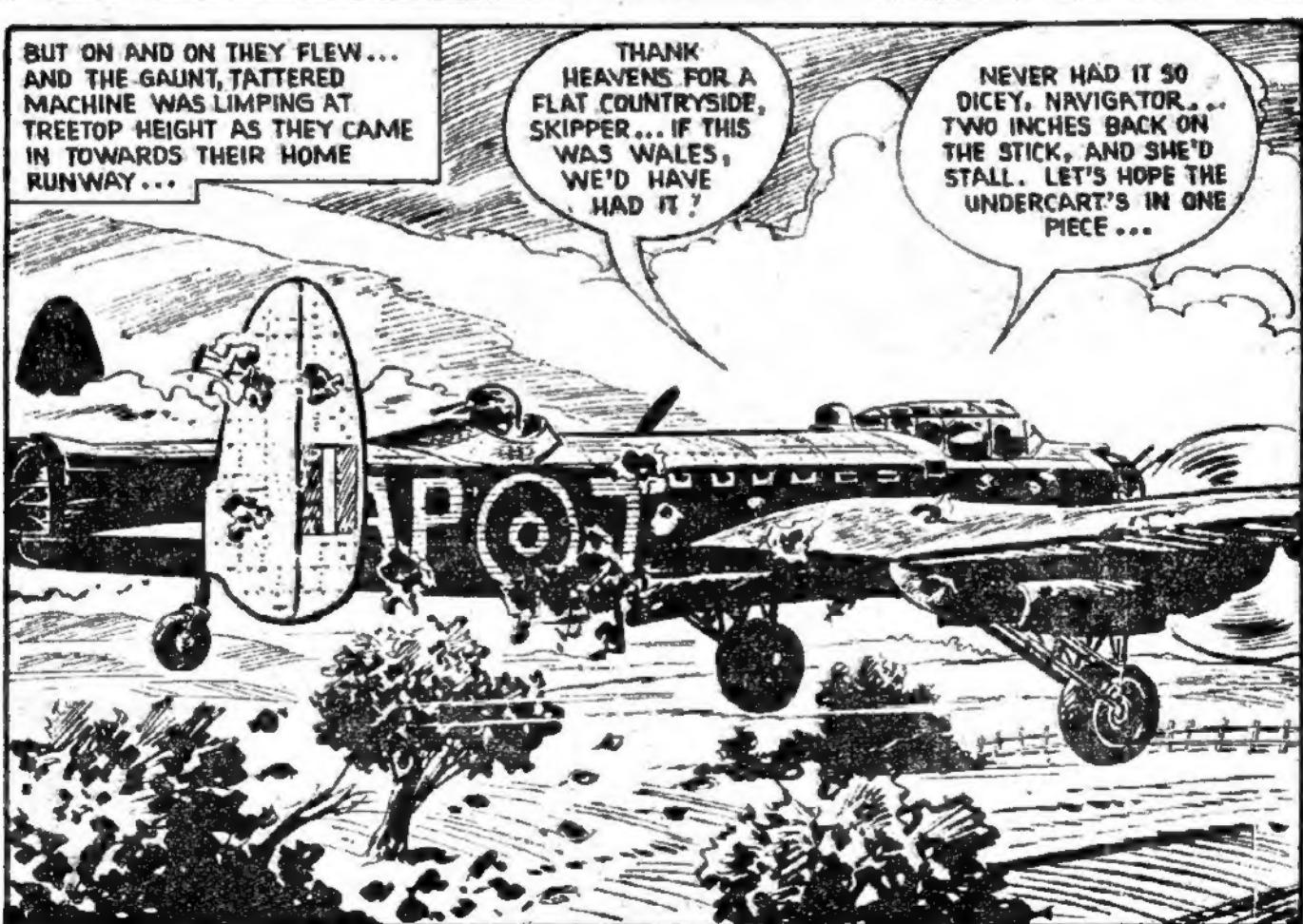
HE'LL BE OKAY, SKIPPER. I'LL GIVE HIM SOME MORPHIA... HE'S ASLEEP...



BUT ON AND ON THEY FLEW... AND THE GAUNT, TATTERED MACHINE WAS LIMPING AT TREETOP HEIGHT AS THEY CAME IN TOWARDS THEIR HOME RUNWAY...

THANK HEAVENS FOR A FLAT COUNTRYSIDE, SKIPPER... IF THIS WAS WALES, WE'D HAVE HAD IT!

NEVER HAD IT SO DICEY, NAVIGATOR... TWO INCHES BACK ON THE STICK, AND SHE'D STALL. LET'S HOPE THE UNDERCART'S IN ONE PIECE...

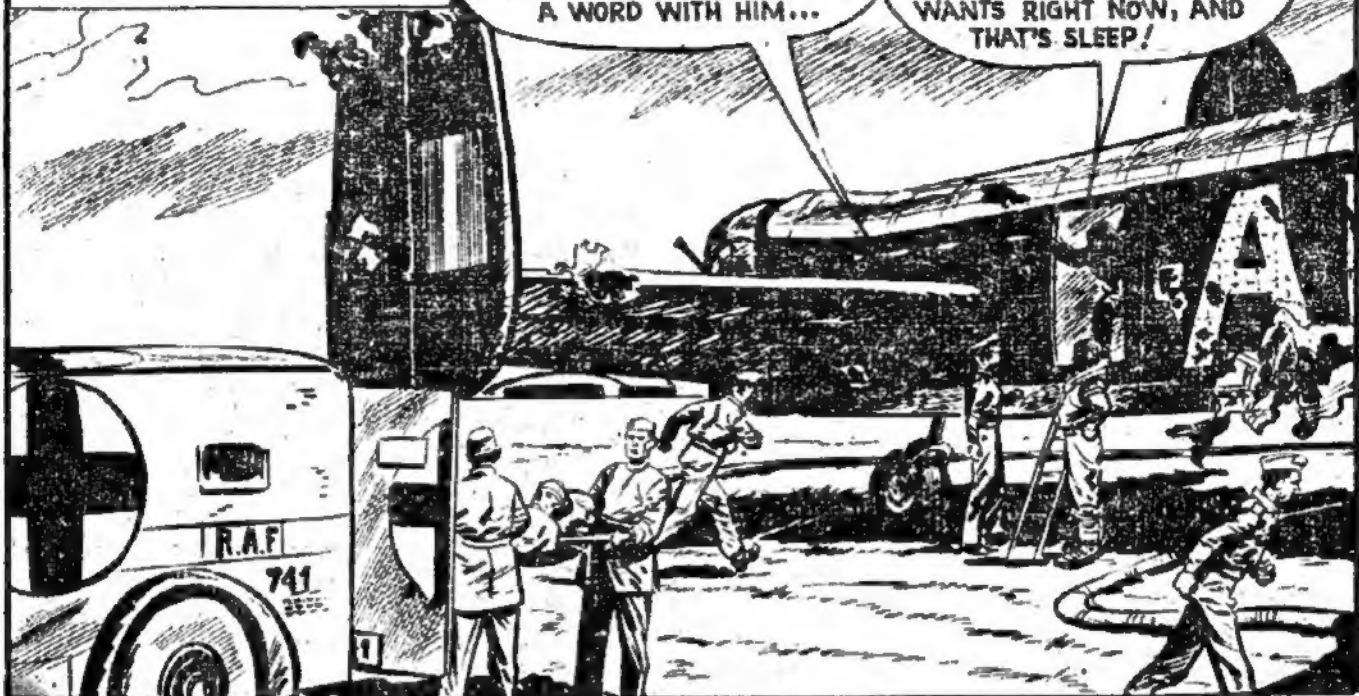


## Raven Over Berlin

BUT THE UNDERCARRIAGE HELD... AND AS THE LANCASTER AT LAST ROLLED TO A STANDSTILL ON THE RUNWAY, WEBLEY SLUMPED FORWARD OVER THE CONTROL COLUMN, UTTERLY EXHAUSTED.

WE THOUGHT YOU'D HAD IT! THE SQUADRON ARE ALL FULL OF THE WAY THE OLD MAN HANDLED RAVEN... HE'S THE HERO OF THE HOUR! I'LL GO INTO THE LANC AND HAVE A WORD WITH HIM...

IF I WERE YOU, SIR, I'D LEAVE HIM WHERE HE IS FOR A WHILE! HE'S CARRIED THIS BUS ALL THE WAY FROM BERLIN ON THREE ENGINES AND HIS WITS... AND THERE'S ONLY ONE THING HE WANTS RIGHT NOW, AND THAT'S SLEEP!



AND SO ENDED 'RAVEN'... AND WITH IT THE ENMITY OF TWO MEN, ONE WHO DIED, AND THE OTHER WHO LIVED TO FLY AGAIN. AIR VICE-MARSHAL USHER VISITED THE SQUADRON AND FOUND WEBLEY MOST DETERMINED IN MIND...

WEBLEY...WE NEED MEN LIKE YOU AT AIR MINISTRY... WE'RE DOING REMARKABLE THINGS IN THE BOMBING RESEARCH UNIT NOW, YOU KNOW...

FLYING IS MY LIFE, SIR! SO LET'S CHANGE THE SUBJECT... IN FACT WHY NOT COME FOR A LITTLE TRIP WITH ME IN MY NEW LANC? AFTER THAT, YOU'LL PROBABLY WANT TO GO ON OPERATIONS YOURSELF...

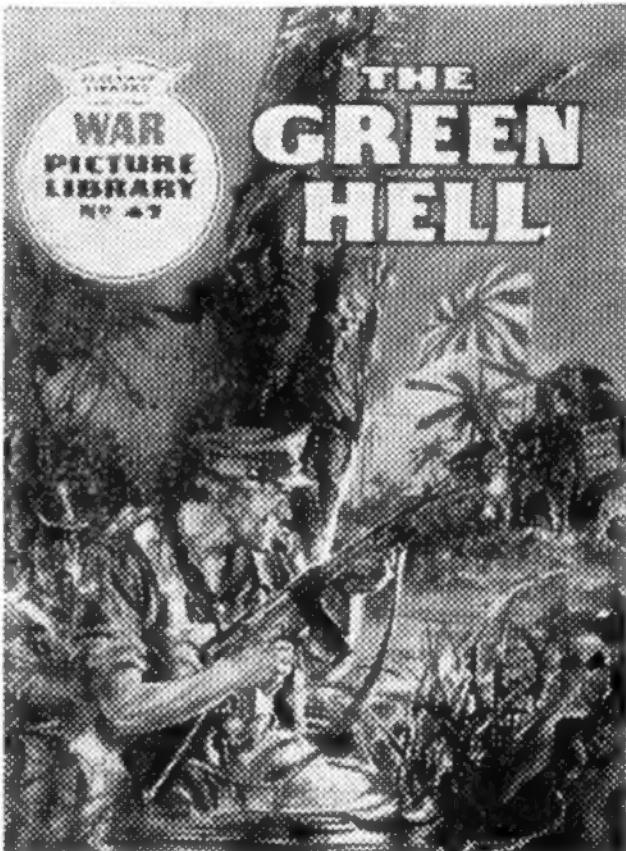
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